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STRIKING LIKENESSES;

OR,

THE VOTARIES OF FASHION.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By LOUISA SIDNEY STANHOPE,
Author of 'Montbrasil Abbey,' and 'The Bandit's Bride.'

If I lash vice in general fiction,
Is't I apply't, or self-conviction?
GAY.

VOL. I.

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STRIKING LIKENESSES.

CHAP. I.

THE evening was serene, the sun was setting in splendour, and the last dying ray danced on the white-topped waves of the Mediterranean: the sea-girt shore could no longer be discerned; long since had it lessened to the eye, and now was totally obscured. Still did Antonia lean over the side of the vessel; still, with painful earnestness, did she seek to penetrate the mists which distance spread between her and the sacred edifice of the Convent of St. Eustacia. "Farewel, dear and tender friends," she mentally ejacu-

lated; "protectors of my infancy, guides of my youth, farewel!"

The sigh of recollection swelled the passing gale; a tear stole down her cheek—it fell upon the cross which suspended from her bosom—she took it up, she impressed on it a fervent kiss—it was the gift of the lady abbess: her parting words recurred to her memory, and her eyes instinctively were fixed on heaven. "Why so pensive, Miss Forrester?" inquired Dr. Moreland, who had approached unobserved. "Methinks the ardent anticipations of youth are obscured by the gloom of retrospection."

Antonia started—she looked on the placid countenance of the good divine, till her full heart seemed to expand towards him, and hail in him a friend. "I was thinking of St. Eustacia's community," she faltered, "of the tender preceptress of my inexperience, of the beloved companions of my

youth; and so strong is the force of imagination, that my ideas had outstripped the winds, and restored me once more to their love." Dr. Moreland smiled. "In England," he answered, "*I* hope my fair enthusiast will meet with friends, who, in stealing from her brow this cast of thought, will implant in her heart the joy of anticipation." "Never," sighed Antonia, whilst her pensive features were animated with momentary fervour, "can the scenes of infancy be expunged from memory." "True," replied the doctor; "but yet, my young friend, the impression may be weakened: the human heart is so peculiarly sensitive, so finely constructed, that it resembles the chief spring of a watch, upon which the revolving motion depends; guard well its axis, and it continues to play; but if once compressed or overladen, its strength of action ceases, and it becomes condensed and powerless." "Know you, for what

the Marquis of Allingthorn has summoned me to England?" she inquired. "To fulfil the arduous office of his guardianship," he replied; "and to see his ward placed in a happy and eligible situation." "Alas!" questioned Antonia, "what situation can be so eligible, or so happy, as the Convent of St. Eustacia?" "Stay, Miss Forrester," exclaimed her companion, "until an intercourse with the world dissipates this darkened cloud of cloistered sadness; until your heart no longer dilates through the false medium of prejudice, but beats with social and innocent gratifications: the benevolent hand which created us, requires not the sacrifice of eternal seclusion, or the abstruse and corroding melancholy of ceaseless prayer, and ceaseless forbearance. 'Tis true we are all pilgrims, sent here to trace the tract of life, but it is not by traversing the desolated dreary wild, that our offering *becomes* the more acceptable: ah no!

believe me, the thousand charms, the thousand allurements which are strewed in our way, when shared with moderation, and enjoyed with innocence, receives the sanction of heaven; by enriching us with content, steals from the pensiveness of sorrow the deep cast of reflection, and gladdens the heart with happiness and peace."

"Alas!" said Antonia, "how different is the doctrine of our holy Confessor, Father Ambrose! He tells us, that every enjoyment is an offence in the eyes of our maker; that the tempter is so wily, and sin so seductive, that the only way to avoid temptation and retain innocence, is to shun every intercourse with society; to tear the heart from the possibility of danger, by enshrouding it with the veil of seclusion, and burying every warm hope, and every social propensity, in the everlasting gloom of a monastery."

'Thou art lost, my child,' he ex-

claimed, as he wept at the cruel mandate which tore me from retirement; ' yes, my daughter, thou art led a trembling victim to sin and sorrow: guard well thy heart from the poisoned arrows of man's flattery: remember that in a thousand flowery shapes sin presents itself, and where it is the most pleasing, there it is ever the most deadly."

Dr. Moreland shuddering, gazed on Antonia with pity and regret; at length, with a countenance glowing with exultation, he took her hand. " My Margaret," he exclaimed, " will teach your heart a different lesson; for not until you know my tender wife, and blooming children, must this subject be renewed." Antonia mournfully bowed, and her eyes rested on the ocean. The moon, resembling an immense fire-ball, rose slowly from the deep; and soon enlightened the white-capped waves with her silver beams:

no cloud obscured her progress; she sailed majestically through the firmament, and mildly smiled on the world of waters.

Still was Antonia silent—the breeze sported with her golden tresses, and her polished forehead was no longer shadowed; her dark blue eyes were raised to heaven; her snowy arms crossed upon her bosom; and night's waning orb, darting o'er her perfect features, gave to her sylph-like form an appearance almost celestial. "But think," said the doctor, gazing on this young and lovely enthusiast, "you are come into the world purposely to contradict the assertion, that all women have curiosity; else would you have made some inquiry respecting the family of which you are so soon to become a member." "Oh no!" she replied, smiling; "on further knowledge you will find me amply versed in this female propen-

sity: but I was thinking upon a subject upon which (with forced emphasis) we must not converse; and the future, nay, the present was obliterated." "For this night, my sweet young friend," returned the worthy divine, "let every idea be forgotten; for ill shall I have discharged my trust, should I suffer my charge to be exposed to the cold damps, which, rising from the water, chill the atmosphere: let us now descend to the cabin, and in the morning, when the sun's full beams dance on the vast expanse, 'kissing each wave,' we will resume our station on the deck, and I will describe the anxious friends who impatiently await the arrival of Miss Forrester in England."

"Friends!" eagerly repeated Antonia, as a momentary hope filled her bosom; "perhaps you have known, have seen my parents; perhaps you can describe to me my father—my

mother—alas !"—and the full tear swelled her eye, "so early was I orphaned, that I remember not the revered authors of my being." "Indeed," replied Dr. Moreland, whose sympathising heart echoed the heavy sigh Antonia's had breathed forth, "my knowledge extends no further, than that your guardian, and my patron, the Marquis of Allingthorn, soothed the dying moments of a parent, by solemnly promising to take charge of the orphan, and to place her, until the age of eighteen, in the Convent of St. Eustacia." "Bless, bless him, Heaven!" faintly murmured Antonia, raising her streaming eyes, "and may the pangs his generous pity lightened, pour down in sevenfold mercy on his honoured head!" "That period is expired," he resumed, "and I was substituted to convey his ward to his more immediate protection." "Was it from the arms of a mother

he received me?" questioned Antonia. "I believe it was," replied the doctor. "Was that mother in Italy?" pursued the agitated girl; "or did England witness the awful scene of her dissolution?" "I know not," he replied.

"Has the marquis never spoke of my father?" she continued. "Perhaps, ah God! perhaps he lives." "Ah no!" interrupted her commiserating friend, who was unwilling to suffer the deceitful rays of hope to steal into her enthusiastic heart, lest fanning the flame, she should sink, faint and despondng beneath the confirmation of a disappointment. "Often have I heard the marquis proclaim you an orphan." Antonia sobbed, and grasping the arm of the doctor, in a deep and internal voice, repeated "Orphan!" while a cold shuddering crept through her frame. "Come, now we will quit the deck," he resum-

ed, supporting her towards the cabin, "and remember, my dear young friend, that the power who for wise and hidden purposes inflicts misfortune, has kindly implanted in the human heart a strength, a fortitude, to subdue its force."

Orphan still trembled on the lips of Antonia; and as the stiffening hand of death seemed to press heavy at her heart, she hastily retired to an inner cabin, appropriated for her accommodation; and having poured forth her fervent adorations to heaven, and with more than usual reverence kissed the precious ensignia of her religion, threw herself on the bed: but restless and uneasy, in vain did she court the somniferous god; ever doth he fly the couch of the unhappy, and, mocking the vain efforts of wretchedness, "lights on lids unsullied with a tear."

She mused on the words of Dr. Moreland till imagination conjured up

a thousand improbabilities; and Hope, guiding the reins of Fancy, whispered, that through the Marquis of Allingthorn every perplexing doubt, every inauspicious fear, would soon be solved. She no longer regretted her visit to England—no longer dreaded her introduction to her guardian—no longer sighed to return to the seclusion of St. Eustacia. "No," whispered her palpitating heart, "from the lips of him to whose protection you consigned me I shall hear the tale of your sorrows, my sainted mother, and weep at your sufferings and your wrongs. I shall know the being who laid open the grave to receive you; who, through the medium of a broken heart, closed upon the young and wearied pilgrim the fairy scenes, the pains, the pleasures of the world, and left her hapless orphan without one tender bosom, save from humanity, on whom she could make a claim."

An incident which had occurred

at the convent had first awakened doubt in the mind of Antonia:—happy, gay, thoughtless, while yet the innocence of childhood guided every idea, she sported like the playful lamb beneath the cheering rays of summer, in the spacious garden of the convent, without once sighing to outstep the barrier, or even in imagination seeking to penetrate the heavy walls. She saw her beloved abbess seated on a bench under a spreading palm tree, and running hastily towards her, sprung upon her lap, and sought to express her gratitude by her tender caresses. The voice of her favourite sister Benedicta, calling aloud the name of Antonia, dictated to her young heart a playful stratagem: she shook her golden ringlets over her fair face, and reclining her rosy cheek on the bosom of the superior, closed her eyes as if in slumber. "Dear child!" exclaimed the nun, gazing affection-

ately on her, "how strong is her resemblance to my unhappy friend! Methinks each day she awakens more like her injured mother.—Should ever the villain behold her!"—"Hush! hush!" said the abbess; but the precaution was too late, for every syllable had sunk deep in the heart of Antonia; she looked anxiously towards the nun, and a tear hung on the dark lashes of her azure eyes.

In vain sister Benedicta sought to evade the questions of the child; in vain she sought to efface the impression her incaution had produced: alas! the words *injured* and *unhappy* were never forgotten, and from that period Antonia never pronounced the name of mother unaccompanied by a fearful, tender, tremulous emotion. The evening previous to her departure from the convent she followed sister Benedicta into her cell; and throwing herself upon her bosom, entreated her to intrust

her with the recital of her mother's sufferings. "Tell me her woes," murmured the weeping girls, "and warn me, ere I trace the dangerous paths of the world, to avoid those who proved themselves her enemies." The nun sighed, and folding her more closely in her arms, said, "Alas! my child, I know not the beings you would mark—I know not the enemies you would fly from: a fearful lapse of years are passed, and the wrongs, the sorrows of your angel mother, are silenced in the gloomy recesses of the grave. Antonia di Rosalva, lovely, guileless, innocent, pure as a vestal virgin, was educated in this community; she was the fondly selected of my heart, my dearest, trusted, best-loved friend; and until she beheld Dudley Forrester, your father, during a visit to her aunt, her only remaining relative, we promised each other to live and die beneath the same sanc-

tuary. But alas! how does the gleam of friendship melt before the flame of love! How soon does the feeling heart yield to the master passion of nature! and as the sea, from which the rivers spring, flows the full tide and swells the silver stream; so by a gentle ebb does it recall the current and claim it all its own. My friend returned to St. Eustacia, but ah, how changed! abstracted, melancholy, she looked the faint shadow of her former self; and if at times she smiled, that smile was quickly succeeded by a tear, which seemed tacitly to reproach the vain effort of gaiety. I read the secret struggles of her soul; and with a blushing cheek, and heaving bosom, learnt the weighty secret. She had listened to the vows of Forrester, and in exchange had ransomed her heart, and all her hopes of happiness: she had acknowledged her love, had promised, most sacredly promised, never

beneath the veil to seek content and peace." "Alas, Antonia! your hapless mother, in that inauspicious visit, had sealed the doom of fate. Again was she summoned from the convent—her aunt was ill, was dying—she left us, and never, never did we see her more. She was married, and with her husband went to England. Buried in impenetrable mystery, two years passed slowly away; at the expiration of which period a stranger, landing at Leghorn, consigned to the protection of the lady abbess the orphan of our beloved, our ill-fated Antonia. A letter from the Marquis of Allingthorn accompanied the precious deposit: he claimed the power of guardian; said he had been nominated such by her sainted mother, and that at the age of eighteen he should reclaim her. Ah, heaven!" pursued the nun, "what were my emotions, when I strained to my aching bosom the lovely miniature of my lost

friend; when I heard her lisp the name of mother, and gaze eagerly around the circle, in search of the being upon whom she called. I wept, as you clung around my neck, and as the burning tears fell on my bosom, you, like a sweet harbinger, sent by your angel parent, kissed away the drops which she had taught to flow."

Such was the account which sister Benedicta gave to the eager solicitations of Antonia; and such the ruminations which filled her waking hours, as the dead of night rolled slowly down, and the etherial light of morning dipped her grey eye in the liquid flood. The seamen, pacing the deck, and the monotonous sound of the water bubbling against the side of the vessel, tinged with melancholy her reflecting mind; and not till the rising sun blushed on the cabin pane did she steep her senses in forgetfulness. "I fear," said Dr. Moreland, as he met

his youthful charge, "the hours of night have not been hours of rest: the faint tint of that cheek on which, but yesterday, the full rose spread her radiance, tells the tale of long watching and painful anxiety. Why, my amiable young friend, will you encourage reflection, which, like the canker-worm, preying invisibly on the sweetest blossoms, leaves but the wreck of beauty? Unless," he continued, with a good-natured smile, "this cast of abstruse thought is banished, instead of a cheerful ardent companion I shall have to present to the ladies Geraldine, and Selina d'Auverne, the pale personification of melancholy:—indeed, indeed, I must see a change; for if this gravity should yield at once to the vivacity of Lady Geraldine, think what a reflection it will cast upon your escort, whose utmost endeavours were unable to draw forth a smile."

Antonia gratefully pressed his hand, and promised to be all he could wish. "But, I thought this day I was to have been made acquainted with my guardian's family. Are the ladies of whom you speak, daughters to the Marquis of Allingthorpe?" "They are," he replied, "and their tenderness and attention will, I have no doubt, notwithstanding the absence of the sisters of St. Eustatia, cheat their new friend into happiness. Lady Geraldine will initiate the lovely novice in the mysteries of the fashionable world; and the gentle Selina will melt her heart to the calm joy of friendship. The marquis has immense wealth and unbounded generosity; with him ostentation is not the cloak of charity, neither are his virtues blonzed by the follies of the age: he is firm, but not imperious; sedate, but not saturnine; in others he can excuse errors which in himself he would condemn: he is

the staunch defender of virtue, the unprejudiced distributer of justice; in short, the sway of every action is principle, and that sway springs from dignity and greatness of soul. Yet expect not, Miss Forrester, to meet perfection. In this motley group you will ever find it a vain search: the strangest contrarieties are often depicted in the same character, and serve more clearly to prove the declaration, that man is prone to err. The marquis, like the disk of the sun, has sombre spots; but, as that all-cheering luminary, his virtues dazzle the eye, ere the obscurity can be observed. "Excellent, respected man!" interrupted Antonia; "how dear to his daughters' hearts must be the meed of praise, erected on the basis of a parent's virtues!" "Yet he is not happy," rejoined the doctor; "a lowering gloom, not of discontent, but of melancholy, pervades his countenance, and marks

his every action: he freely distributes to others that which he does not partake; for in his breast peace finds not a resting place: the joys of life, the vigour of health, are apparently undermined by this hidden woe; and frequently does he discover an anxiety of mind from which no lenitives of friendship, no panacea can relieve him: content smiles not beneath the garb of his splendour; for fortune, not felicity, is his portion. Alas! how often do we see those who possess a zest for enjoyment, unable to command the means; while others, as if to silence our murmurs at the dispensations of Providence, when every gratification courts their embrace, lose intirely all relish for life, and sink into inactivity and sorrow!" "Poor man!" sighed Antonia, "so good, yet so unhappy. If I was blest with such a father," and a transient glow o'erspread her cheek, "how anxious should I be to share

his anguish, and sooth him into peace! But perhaps the bosoms of his children are not the repositories of his secret; perhaps, confined to his own breast, his sighs are hastily repelled, and his complaints smothered ere they rise." "Indeed, I believe they are," he replied, "for even from the marchioness the secret is preserved." "A secret from his own wife!" reiterated the astonished girl, "it is very strange, for often has the abbess told me, matrimony was an union of interests as well as hearts. How then can secrecy be reconciled?" "The abbess was perfectly right," he replied, smiling at the *naïveté* of her manner." "Marriage should ever be founded on esteem, and thence unlimited confidence will result. But there are matches of interest as well as affection, matches which the law, not Heaven, sanctions." "The abbess told me of the world she had seen," artlessly said Antonia—

"she was never in England." "Nay, I must justify my countrymen," resumed her companion, "for believe me, Miss Forrester, interest is a weed which every soil nurtures—it is not confined to space or climate; and proud am I to boast, that Britain is a garden, in which the flowers of virtue, freedom, patriotism, and magnanimity flourish, unchoked by slavery, disaffection, and dissention." "Happy country!" exclaimed Antonia, as her eyes perused the animated expression of the doctor's countenance. "It is an isle favoured by Heaven," he continued, "an isle, in which every clay-built hut is a strong castle to its honest possessor; an isle, which has mercy for its laws, and justice for its ruler." "But the Ladies Geraldine and Selina—" she observed, interrupting him. "Thank you," he replied, "for in the warmth of my panegyric I had forgotten even the family of my

patron: so true is it, that when an Englishman descants on the blessings of his country, every lesser subject is obliterated. The Marchioness of Allingthorn, (for 'tis right the heads of the family should be described ere we notice the descendants) is a character unmarked by peculiarity. The heiress of immense wealth, at an early age her heart singled out the marquis, and love marked him the lord of her hopes and wishes; she became his bride, and, even to this day, her affection has not diminished; still does an ardent, romantic tenderness sway her actions, and claims, if not his love, at least the meed of gratitude. Twice did the marchioness fan the hopes of her lord, by the promise of an heir; and twice, on the birth of his daughters, were those hopes closed in disappointment. The Lady Geraldine in three months attains her one and twentieth year; and at that period, through the liberality

of a doating god-mother, comes into the unrestrained possession of eighty thousand pounds. She is very handsome, very gay, very thoughtless, and very fashionable, fond of dissipation and show; indeed, in every respect, the direct opposite to the mild and lovely Selina, whose manners, ever consonant to my own heart, I must acknowledge is my favourite. And yet, I believe the stamina of the Lady Geraldine to be intrinsically good; I believe she possesses strong and decided virtues, did she allow herself thought for action; but unchecked and the sport of every wild whim, she daily substantiates to the reflective mind, the error of over indulgence, and the fatal tendency of unlimited admiration. The idol of a fond mother, and the worshipped goddess of *Fashion's* noisy *votaries*, she ridicules every serious pursuit; and will, I fear, by her ill-timed levity, alienate a heart, whose

possession ought to be her chief boast and cherished happiness. Percival Dauverne, the orphan son of the marquis's only brother, and the heir to the title and estates, from infancy has been the affianced husband of Geraldine. For the happiness of this young man my heart is deeply interested; for him I feel almost a father's fondness, for I have pruned his youthful mind, and "taught his young ideas how to shoot." Dignified, yet alive to conviction; with the pride of a free-born mind, he possesses the philanthropy and softness of soul, known by the appellation of sensibility: no wrongs unheeded steal upon his ear—no sorrows unsympathized awaken his notice: beneath the polished manners of a courtier, he wears the ingenuous stamp of probity, and possesses every quality dignified by the name of virtue." "Ah, Heaven!" sighed Antonia, "how little can the volatile Lady Geraldine appreciate

such excellence." "His very errors," he continued, "arise from a noble source, for in the ardent impetuosity of his manner, called forth by a tale of wrong or oppression, we may trace a feeling and disinterested heart. Such is my esteemed pupil; such the mind which is destined to assimulate with one so diametrically opposite. Often do I wish, when I behold the gentle Selina blushing at the pointed raillery of her sister, that fate had marked her the partner of Dauverne. No less lovely, she has not yet attained her twentieth year; and though unpossessed of the playful vivacity of Geraldine, she is marked by a graceful sweetness of manner, which renders her particularly interesting and attractive. Methinks in her, Miss Forrester will hail a friend, and that a little time will enrol Antonia and Selina in the bonds of tender amity."

CHAP. II.

THE voyage was safe and expeditious, and the instructive conversation of Dr. Moreland stole away the length of time, and filled the mind of our heroine with reverence and esteem. A thousand little anecdotes were repeated, to point out the world in which she was launching, and teach the lovely novice the ways of man: yet often would she shrink from the impressive lesson, and sigh at the remembrance of the kind friends she had left in Italy. Tears filled her eyes as she retraced her separation from the maternal abbess, and the good and tender sister Benedicta; and at those moments, gladly would she have resigned the protection of the Marquis of Allingthorn, to be once more restored to her

cherished sanctuary. In England she expected not to find the happiness she had there experienced; and with bitter regret she reflected on the wide unfathomable ocean, which would so soon roll between her and the loved retreat of her infancy—the sacred walls of St. Eustacia's convent.

Suddenly the white-cliff shores of Albion became distinguishable from the clouds which rose on the horizon: a burst of pleasure issued from every mouth. Antonia started, and, hastily turning, beheld Dr. Moreland leaning over the side of the vessel: tears of rapture stole down his cheek, as his eyes rested on the dear country which gave him birth, which contained his wife—his children; and which spread wide her friendly arms to welcome him once more to her bosom. The name of Margaret trembled on his lips, and he clasped his hands in token of thankfulness. The sun's bright

splendour, penetrating the glowing clouds, darted his "long level line of streaming light" over the troubled bosom of the deep, and reflected the imperial tints on the liquid mirror; the scene was sublimely beautiful, and stole even from the pensive mind of Antonia the sadness of thought. She traced, in the various countenances around her, the different emotions arising from the same source: here the loud laugh, there the expressive smile, and here the tear which joy had taught to flow. She raised her full eyes to the God of nature, grateful for the happiness of her fellow-creatures, although her own heart experienced not one cheering ray.

They landed at Gravesend, and in less than three hours, whirled by the impetuosity of four post-horses, the carriage rattled over the stones of London. The sun had long since dropped behind its etherial curtain; and the

heavy thickness of the atmosphere, rolling like clouds of smoke through the firmament, rendered it unusually gloomy. Antonia, ever accustomed to the clear invigorating breezes of Italy, inhaled in all the purity of unconfined space, looked fearfully at her conductor, expecting each moment to hear the thunder's awful peel, or to see the vivid lightning pierce her blue fires through the thick bosom of the threatening sky. Her expressive countenance, ever an index to her mind ere her lips could articulate, betrayed her alarm; and the doctor, smiling, solved every uneasy apprehension, by descanting on the vast circumference of the metropolis, the compact uniformity of the buildings, and that the curling smoke, issuing from every individual chimney, occasioned the misty gloom which had filled her presaging mind with fear.

Doubt yielded to wonder: the noisy

buz of this vast capital, the glare of the lamps, the clamour in the streets, the crowds of pedestrians, and the rattling of the carriages, were sights so new and unexpected, that Dr. Moreland beheld with pleasure her varying countenance, and smiled at the eagerness with which she gazed from the window, on the fleeting objects as the chaise rolled along the streets. At length, unable longer to contain her feelings, she said, in a voice of amazement: "I know London is large; yet surely all these people cannot find a home."—"I trust they all can boast the blessing," replied Dr. Moreland; "for the God who created them in his own image, placed them not here to perish."—"Wonderful!" she exclaimed, as her eyes again sought the street.

The chaise stopped at an elegant house in St. James's-square; and soon were the travellers seated by a cheer-

ful fire, in a warm comfortable parlour. The family had quitted town two days previous; and a note, left by the marquis for the doctor, signified his wish that Miss Forrester might reside at the vicarage, until the arrival of the family at the Grange, which would not exceed a month: "and then, my esteemed friend," he continued, "I will receive from your protection my fair ward, for whose welfare my heart feels deeply interested."

Antonia, wearied by her journey, was far from being displeased at this intelligence, as she felt unequal to an immediate introduction, and anticipated great pleasure in cultivating the acquaintance of Mrs. Moreland, in whose praise the good divine had so often expatiated.

A letter was dispatched into Warwickshire by the night's post, to relieve the fears of an anxious wife, by announcing their safe arrival in Eng-

land; and as they purposed pursuing their journey in the morning, they retired early to rest. Antonia sunk into a sound refreshing sleep, and awoke not till the neighbouring churches proclaimed the hour of nine: she started from her pillow, and soon joined the doctor, who awaited her in the breakfast-parlour. Eager to quit London, he had long since risen, but felt unwilling to disturb his young charge, whose repose he knew was rocked in the cradle of fatigue. He shook her affectionately by the hand, inquired after her health, and good-humouredly silenced her every effort at apologising for her protracted slumbers.

"Time has been," said he, "when returned from a less important journey, the mid-day sun has found me sleeping—and time will be, when, like myself, anxious to behold a prattling charge, Miss Forrester will defy fatigue, and smile at distance."

Antonia blushed and took her station at the table. Scarce was breakfast concluded; while yet the chariot was waiting, the door was thrown open, and unannounced a stranger entered; from whose Brutus wig, round drab frock, high boots, and leather *systems*, Antonia concluded to be the groom who was to attend them into Warwickshire. "Hah, Dr. Moreland! how fare you?" exclaimed the intruder. "Is Dauverne in town? I want to see him.—When did you arrive? Where are you going?" At the same time profoundly bowing to Antonia, who to escape his scrutinizing glances, under pretence of preparing for her departure, stole out of the room. "In the name of all that's beautiful, who is that divine creature? 'Pon my soul, doctor, I would turn hermit to be the escort of such an angel!" "I presume you are speaking of Miss Forrester, my lord," he gravely replied

"Nay, don't presume about it, my good doctor; but come at once to the point, and tell me, if that dazzling star sets in this blest metropolis, or shoots its splendour to some more favoured sphere?" "Miss Forrester leaves town in a few minutes," said the doctor. "But who is she? What is she? Where is she going?" importuned the Earl of Carberry. "Excuse me, my lord," looking at his watch, "my time will not admit of my answering inquiries."

At the same time he approached the door, and requested a servant to inform Miss Forrester he was ready to attend her. Lord Carberry insisted upon waiting on her to the carriage; and ardently pressing her hand, bowed as it drove off.

"Who is that strange being?" asked Antonia. "The Earl of Carberry," said her friend; "known by the appellation of a *dashing fellow*, for he at-

tends all jockey-clubs, races, boxing-matches, and such *fashionable* meetings; and in the exercise of the whip, boasts that he can distance the most thorough-bred groom in the kingdom. Besides," smiling, "he is one of our legislator; but fortunately there are many *silent* members, for a voice, like his, would neither add to the welfare or glory of the state. But now that I have satisfied your curiosity, I must inform you, that you had no sooner quitted the room than he made the same inquiry: I assure you he is a profound admirer of beauty, and his attentions are courted by all women of *taste*." "Oh! then, I am sure, I shall never be enrolled beneath their banner," said Antonia, laughing, "for his look and manner in my opinion was quite impertinent." "When you have seen more of the world, my fair novice," he replied, "you will judge with more lenity; remember you have

never mingled in fashionable life; and before your visit to England shall have been extended six months, mark my words, if you do not see the features of shame herself bronzed over by indulgent custom."

Leaving Dr. Moreland, and his fair charge, beguiling the length of the road by conversation, we will revisit the metropolis, and attend the steps of the Earl of Carberry—not to all his haunts, or to his visit to Mrs. Courtland, the *bonne amie* or *necessary* appendage to a man of rank; but to his own drawing-room, which about half past two he entered; and slightly bowing to his amiable countess, who but a twelve months before, glowing with a passion dignified by the name of love, he had led as the idol of his adoration to the altar of hymen, threw himself on the sofa. The image of Antonia was not yet effaced, for notwithstanding his cursory view of

the lovely foreigner, his heated imagination deified her with the appellation of angel, who bid fair to stand unrivalled in the annals of beauty. "Ah, Carberry! is it you?" said the countess receiving with a smile of the sweetest tenderness her truant lord. "For this hour, I have been watching every sound in the hope of your return. I do think I am perfect in my lesson—shall I con it this morning, love?" Lesson—lesson!"—repeated the earl, "of what is your ladyship speaking?" "Nay, think a moment," she replied, "and you will certainly remember." "Not I, truly," said his lordship; "'tis gone with many better things no doubt, and you may as well send me to seek the last moon." "The pretty ponies you gave me, my dear Carberry, on condition that I should learn to drive them." "Aye, aye, true, I remember; Spanker and Firebrand, two devilish tight little things:

Harry Bravenger would give down two hundred on the nail to have them; they are true blood, and for swiftness I'd match them against Arkerman's filly Snowball, who hoaxed the knowing ones at Newmarket last season." "Their excellence cannot encrease the value of the present, Carberry; were they the poorest hacks, I hould cherish them for the sake of the beloved doner." "Well said, Cecilia; but avaunt with sentiment, and tell me in plain English what it is you wish." "To drive you round Hyde-park, my love; 'tis a fine morning, the curricle is at the door, and then you will see a specimen of my skill." "I am sorry—that is—I have an appointment—excuse me," yawning, "I am going to Tattersall's. By heaven! the sweetest creature in the world, damme if I don't have her!" The countess started, and looking fearfully at him, "of whom are you speaking, Carberry?"

"Of—of—of—what! are you jealous, Cecilia? Come, come, that's foolish, that's ante-diluvian; jealousy is out of fashion; you follow your inclination, act independently, do as you please; I follow my inclination, act independently, do as I please; and by Jupiter we shall be the happiest couple in England! The stare, the gaze, the envy of all the poor devils whom matrimony has made miserable." A heavy sigh heaved the snowy bosom of the countess. "Thank heaven! Carberry," she said, "we belong not to that class." "Nay, child, answer for yourself," he replied, gazing from the window. "By all that's lucky, yonder comes Tom Sunderland, one of the best fellows in the world: he shall take my seat, Cecilia; you may drive him to Nova Scotia, for he'll go to the devil for a pretty woman." The soft eyes of the countess rested mournfully on her lord. "Then I will stay at

home," she murmered, smothering a second sigh. "Do as you please, only don't insist on my attendance." And away flew the thoughtless husband, to overtake the fashionable loungen, to whose care he would have entrusted his so lately adored Cecilia. "What's the pursuit? Where are you going? Why in such haste? Aye, Sunderland?" inquired the earl, clapping his companion on the shoulder. "Faith, Carberry! whither you have steered before me, to the land of matrimony. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and I had so cursed a run of ill-luck last night that nothing less can save me." "Alas, poor Tom!" sung the earl. "That she devil, the old Duchess of ——" he continued, "was hid in a shower of gold; not a *sous* left in my pocket: to stop short of the Fleet, I have cut with the 'cubic gods,' and if ever I

accept another bet, may fortune cut with me." "Five hundred to your breaking your vow before to-morrow night," said the earl. "Done, done," repeated Sunderland. "Pshaw! nonsense!" joining in the laugh, "I'll never lay another bet as long as I live." "But who is this weighty divinity, at whose shrine you purpose so submissively to bow?" questioned Carberry. "The Marquis of Allingthorn's heiress; neither age or infirmity will do for me; I must have beauty as well as gold." "It won't do Tom; Dauverne's a devilish handsome fellow; you'll find him a formidable rival." "Damme, who's afraid? flattery is a staunch auxiliary." "It is too often applied in that quarter to pass for sterling," observed the earl; "Geraldine has too much wit, too much beauty, to be easily caught." "True, she is pretty and lively,

but——" "Come, come," interrupted Carberry, "no buts, not a word there.

"If to *her* share some female errors fall
Look on *her* face and you'll forget them all."

"Faith, I suspect I shall find a rival in your lordship." "Not you, truly; my heart is too much absorbed by the image of one beauty to think of another." "What the countess? turned to a faithful damon; or, perhaps the dashing Mrs. Courtland." "Neither, by my hopes of favour; as for the latter, if you will you may take her off my hands." "No, no, my noble friend; she's too old, she's forty." "What's that?" rejoined the earl, "a *radiant star* has set the example, and we his satellites cannot do less than follow." "Well, but who is this incognito? Who is this divine Helen, who by one glance has fired the heart of a second Paris?" "Faith,

that's more than I can tell—I only know, that this morning I stumbled upon that sophistical, philosophical, phlegmatic quiz of a country parson, Dr. Moreland, who, like the famed dragon of old, guarding the Hesperian fruit, had under his protection the most perfect female form I ever beheld; an eye as when the sun peeps from a cloud of purest white.

"Oh, she is more than painting can express
Or youthful poets fancy when they love."

But she was so timid, so retiring, so blushing, that when by my looks I sought to express my admiration, she shrunk abashed from their scrutiny, and hurried out of the apartment. I seized the glorious golden opportunity, and from the doctor pressed an explanation. I learnt her name was Forrester—but in reply to all my eager hopes, my anxious wishes, with the most chilling frigidity, he told me,

time would not admit his answering my questions." "Oh, the barbarian! the icicle-hearted savage!" exclaimed Sunderland. "But what did you reply to this damper?" "Faith, I remained mute; for there's a something in his demure phiz which will not bear sporting with." "And the divinity?" questioned Sunderland. "Entered the chariot," he replied, "blushed at the soft pressure of her hand, as though she had been unaccustomed to such eloquent language, and quitted London." "What would you say to the man who could let you into the secret history of this little Italian?" "Say," resumed the earl, "that he merits a civic crown; that his name deserves immortalizing; that—" "Then behold the man," interrupted Sunderland laughing. "Miss Forrester, educated in a convent near Leghorn, and wholly accustomed to the society of nuns and friars, is the long-talked

of ward of the Marquis of Allingthorn; and if the hints of Lady Geraldine are to be credited, is dependent on her guardian's bounty." "Say you so?" exclaimed the earl, "then be mine the victory—independence, and an ardent lover, will stagger the faith of enthusiasm." In unfolding the pages of *life*, we now find it necessary to leave these Machiavalean confederates, and return to the unsuspecting travellers, who so long had been made the subjects of their animadversions.

CHAP. III.

It was a clear, beautiful morning, and the country through which they passed clothed in the verdant livery of spring, pleased and enraptured the senses of Antonia; mild and etherial, as the breeze which blew, was the face of nature: the hedges, bedecked with the pale primrose, the purple violet, and drooping blue-bell, sent forth the sweetest odours; and every scattered cottage smiled with the golden crocus and spotless snowdrop: the birds shrilly carolled from every spray; and the rosy peasant hailed the passing travellers with many a rustic bow. No half-famished wretches appeared to reproach the rich with their sighs of misery; no oppressed and subjugated tenantry, born, like the premature

blossom, to wither and to die, clothed the road to shock the feelings of unprejudiced humanity. Every face wore the stamp of a free happy people, glowing with health, content, and industry; their bow marked not the cringe of fear, it appeared rather an obeisance at the shrine of gratitude, for the promulgation of those laws, which enfranchised their rights, yet sanctioned subordination. "How different are the aspects of these people to those who crowd the streets of the metropolis," observed Antonia; "they look as though they belonged not to the same nation." "Your remark is just," said Dr. Moreland; "yet when you reflect on their different avocations and pursuits your wonder will instantly cease. The anxious citizen, eager to increase his store, with manners compressed by intense application, and a mind occupied by *cent per cent*, or some weighty specu-

lation, passes swiftly on in the line of business, regardless of each surrounding object; and though treading in the busy haunts of men, and mingling in the noisy hum of the world, yet are his thoughts completely abstracted and confined to the narrow circumference of the counting-house: his brow becomes contracted and steals imperceptibly from his countenance the open glowing tints of nature. But in these 'children of a lesser growth," he continued, "we see nature unsophisticated; we trace all her warm and ardent attributes unveiled and uninfluenced: bodily, not mental exertion, invigorates their athletic forms, and gives them health for enjoyment and strength for labour." "Ah! how far happier is the lot of these industrious people," said Antonia; "how easy must be their task to fulfil; innocence lightens their toils, and peace smiles them to repose." England cannot

boast a more useful member of society than an honest citizen," rejoined the doctor; "but for them our manufactories would cease and our commerce dwindle. In short, we are placed here, like wheels in a machine, necessary to the well being, nay existence of each other."

Anxious to reach Bedford that night, they paused but to change horses, and then with the utmost expedition prosecuted their journey. The sun sunk slowly in the west, and the last lingering beam shot, like a ray of glory, athwart the heavens; no boisterous wind ruffled the expanding foliage, or swept o'er the heathy fern of the sloping hedges: nature was still and hushed, a balmy zephyr played, and wafted on the ear the monotonous tinkling of the distant sheep-bell. Imperceptibly the prospect became contracted, for "twilight grey had in her sober livery all things

clad!" and tinged with a shade of soft etherial blue, the distant hills seemed to melt and mingle in the humid mists of the surrounding atmosphere.

Still in friendly converse the time glided away, and Antonia, in listening to the pointed remarks and just perceptions of Dr. Moreland, felt not the fatigue of distance. Already did her heart acknowledge the virtues of the gentle Margaret—already did she long to possess the affection of his blooming offspring; for, like a true father, the good vicar had enumerated their budding promises of worth, and dwelt with lengthened earnestness on their tender exploits.

The moon's chaste beams illumined the road, and when the travellers gained the summit of Long Compton hill, broad and cloudless, she sailed majestically in the heavens; but her rays, unlike the more brilliant sun, penetrated not the distant corners of

the far spreading prospect; and though in part our fair novice lost the beauties of that picturesque view, still her eyes in delighted admiration rested on the rich pastures of Warwickshire.

It was near the stroke of ten when Dr. Moreland, looking from the window, exclaimed, in a voice of pleasure, "Here we are!" and a moment after the carriage stopped; the step was let down, and the congratulating accents of tenderness were alone to be distinguished. Three lovely children clung to their father's knees, while the affectionate mother, with a seraph smile, welcomed his return to the vicarage. "And here is one, my dearest Margaret," he said, taking the hand of Antonia, "whom I need not recommend to your esteem; for to know and to love Miss Forrester are synonimous."

Antonia bowed to the kind compliment, and with unfeigned pleasure

returned the salutation of Mrs. Moreland. "But where is my darling Rosa?" inquired the doctor, missing one from the group. "Oh! she was so tired," answered Ellen, "that the poor little thing was obliged to go to bed; and though we kept telling her, papa was coming; yet she dropped asleep in mama's arms." "And Percival very near did the same," said Stanley. "Well, and if I did," replied the smiling boy, "it does not argue that I thought less of papa." "Indeed it does not, my dear children," said the doctor, raising one upon each knee, whilst Stanley, standing between, looked delightedly in his face. "'Tis long since these little eyes have been open at so late an hour," continued the happy father, placing his hand on the head of his first born; "I hope you have all adhered to my injunctions, and given your excellent mother as little trouble as possible." "Indeed,

my love, they have been every thing I could wish," said Mrs. Moreland; "and Stanley, as your representative, sat at the bottom of the table, and looked, I assure you, quite important." "I don't doubt it," he replied; "but has nothing new transpired?" "Oh yes!" articulated the energetic Percival; "Daphne has got such a beautiful puppy, and the old pied-bald mare has tumbled down and broke her knees." "And cousin Stanley has been here," interrupted Ellen, "and has given me such a fine doll; and Rosa a wax baby, just like herself." "And me," said Stanley, "a fishing rod." "And me," repeated the laughing Percival, "a gun." "Indeed; well now, my little prattlers," kissing each, "go, dream of your presents, and in the morning I will see them all." But the tender father could not wait till the morning to see his last-born treasure; for ere he par-

took of supper, accompanied by Mrs. Moreland and Antonia, he ascended to the nursery, and kissed the downy cheek of the slumbering innocent. "God bless my darling!" he murmured, turning from the cot; and his eye meeting the grateful mother's, sparkled with parental fervour.

Antonia, when on her pillow, reflected on the domestic scene she had witnessed, and keenly acknowledged the horrors of her orphan state: never had she experienced a father's kindness, or a mother's care—never felt the thrilling sensitive emotions of gratitude when caressed and praised by the authors of her being. Ah no! the relentless grave had marbled the heart which once for her throbbed with painful joy and pleasing anxiety, and buried in its dark recesses the force of affection, the attribute of nature. Tears stole from her eyes as the scenes of existence passed in review before

her, and a long lingering sigh suppressed the stifling sobs of wounded sensibility.

Again imagination recurred to her new and amiable friends—again she beheld the expressions of rapture beaming from the eyes of the children when hailing the return of their parent. "Happy! happy family!" she mentally ejaculated. "How poor is power! how insignificant are riches! give me content and peace—give me the blessed calm which shines upon the inhabitants of the vicarage, and I ask no greater boon! their lives are

——————"Harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love;
Where friendship full exerts her softest pow'r,
Perfect esteem, enlivened by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence!"

Dr. Moreland, to whose care auspicious destiny had committed the charge of Antonia, was of a respectable, but not ennobled family; his erudition was strong, his manners dignified, his feelings comprehensive: but to paint his probity, his benevolence, and his moral virtues require an abler historian than myself: be it my task to say, that in the closet he was the true adviser, the sincere friend; in the drawing-room the polished gentleman; in the church the meek promoter of christianity. His voice was sonorous, his manner impressive, his language adapted to the meanest capacity of his poorest parishioner. To the wicked he preached repentance; to the erring strength; to the good perseverance; to the afflicted submission. The heart untouched could not listen to his precepts, and

"Fools who came to scoff remained to pray!"

To him the poor poured forth their grievances: in him the rich sought a friend; but his esteem was ever the attribute of virtue, and not robed in the ermine of kings, could iniquity claim the sanction of his notice. At an early age, he beheld, in the daughter of a friend, the counterpart of his own excellence; for Margaret possessed his every quality, refined in the mould of female softness. He wooed her, not with the languor and insipidity of a *modern beau*, but with the glowing ardour of sincere affection; and no sooner, through the interest of his patron the Marquis of Allingthorn, was he presented to the living of ———, than the rites of marriage confirmed the long-cemented union of their hearts; and two years had scarcely elapsed, ere he was invested with a second valuable benefice, in the gift of his nephew, Sir Frederic Stanley, vacated by the death of the incumbent.

The education of Percival Dauverne was intrusted to his care; and the mild dignity and tempered greatness of his pupil evinced the force of example. Sir Frederic Stanley, the orphan son of an only sister, had likewise shared the benefit of his instruction. He was the bosom-friend of his fellow-student; but his warm and sanguine disposition frequently perverted the efforts of reason, and exposed him to the rapacity of experienced artifice. The volatility of his manners rendered him easy of access, and often cast a momentary shadow on his ingenuous heart: yet was he alive to conviction, and in the moments of recovered reason, ere yet he felt the inconvenience to which his natural impatience subjected him, would execrate the blind maddened folly of impetuosity. Dr. Moreland, foreseeing the consequences, had in his youth taken the utmost pains to curb and keep his passions in subjection:

but no sooner had he snapped the bridle of restraint—no sooner was he entered at Oxford, than, " wild as colt untamed," he yielded to his natural bent, and, in the hours of recreation, plunged into difficulties, which, but for the overruling friendship and unprejudiced arguments of Dauverne, might have terminated in danger, not to say disgrace. On the continent, whither the scions of nobility are sent, to acquire *grace* and *foreign confidence*, too frequently ingrafted on the stalk of folly and unblushing vice, the same mad career was continued; and like many contemporaries in the same pursuit, while the fond parent, anxious guardian, or friend, pictures the eager strides of hopeful youth to the goal of learning and perfection, Sir Frederic plunged into the vortex of voluptuous extravagance and destructive dissipation; and to perpetuate his fame for *notoriety*, while at Venice, in the ca-

sual absence of Dauverne, shot a Venetian nobleman through the arm, for presuming to contradict his assertion, that his favourite, Signora Rossignoletta, was the prettiest warbler at the opera. Chagrined at the consequences of his rashness, he sent a hasty dispatch to his friend, and by him was hurried into Austria, to avoid the inconvenience of a prison. Leaving all *rusticity* and *national reserve* on the opposite side of the German ocean, Sir Frederic Stanley returned to his native land, and took possession of his princely fortune, with a heart as prone to benevolence, and a head as prone to error, as any British subject thus *polished* in the school of fashion.

The bright beams of the morning-sun, penetrating the window-curtains of Antonia's chamber, broke the soft slumbers of innocence, and dissipated the visions of ever-waking fancy: she rose, though scarcely seven, and de-

scending into the hall, met the children preparing to take their accustomary ramble. They welcomed their new friend with unfeigned joy; and little Rosa, smiling sweetly, declared she already loved her. "And so did I, Miss Forrester," said Percival, taking her other hand as they entered the garden, "the very first moment I saw you."

Stanley left them on the borders of the Avon, whose clear stream meandered through the grounds, to cast his line in the flood; and Percival, ere they reached the extremity of the shrubbery, darted hastily away in search of something he appeared to have forgotten. "I know what he is gone for," lisped Rosa, with an air of importance.—"For Daphne and the puppy, I dare say," replied Ellen.—"Oh, no! that I am sure it is not," said Rosa; for——for——can't you guess, sister?"—"For the key of the

orchard, to shew us the poor pied bald mare who has tumbled down?" asked Ellen.—"No, no," laughing, "you are not right yet."—"We shall all know presently," said Antonia; "for yonder he is coming."

The lovely boy, panting and breathless, with glowing cheeks and a beating heart, now overtook them: his hand was full of crums of bread; and Rosa, jumping, exclaimed, "Ah! I knew it was for the robins."—"I have a great many little pensioners, Miss Forrester," said he, smiling; "and the sweet birds are so tame, that if by accident I forget my usual practice, they flutter about me, as though they would reproach the oversight."—"I think that cannot often happen," remarked Antonia, looking with delighted affection on the blooming boy.—"Oh, yes! I assure you, I am often very heedless, and forget those things I ought to remember. But, see," as they entered

the filbert walk, "yonder they come: if we stand quite still, they will eat out of my hand. Do leave off playing, little kitten," (to Rosa), "if you skip about so, you will frighten the birds." Rosa laughed at her brother's caution; and the crums being scattered in the accustomed place, they proceeded on their walk.

On returning to the vicarage, they found Stanley at the same sedentary employment: he had not met with a single bite, yet was his patience unexhausted. "Oh, dear!" exclaimed Percival; "I should have been so tired, that, long before now, the fishing-rod would have been seen floating down the river."—"I believe you," said Dr. Moreland, advancing towards them; "you were never famed for patience, son Percival; and cool deliberate perseverance, I fear, is your antipathy. 'Tis astonishing," turning to Antonia, "what contrariety of dispositions is

met with in one family: I believe, never father was blessed with two more affectionate boys; and yet in every point they are as diametrically opposite as north and south. But now tell me, my young friend," taking the hand of Antonia, "how you have rested, and how you like our part of the world." "Most comfortably," she replied; "but in a few days I shall be better enabled to pass my opinion of Warwickshire."—"True; but now we will join Mrs. Moreland, who is waiting breakfast for us; and after the little necessary duties of instruction are performed, if you are not fatigued with your morning's ramble, we will visit your future residence, the Grange."

The practice of this amiable pair was to enrich and unfold the minds of their offspring; not by severe injunctions, but by tenderness and persuasion, to point out the paths of truth, and

teach them the road to industry, wisdom, and virtue. Dr. Moreland was the indefatigable tutor of his sons—Mrs. Moreland, the mild instructress of her daughters; and the hours appropriated to study were suffered, under no pretence whatever, to be interrupted.

After breakfast they retired to their several employs, and Antonia passed the intermediate space, in perusing the works of our inimitable bard, Shakespeare.

"Now, my dear Miss Forrester," said Percival, hastening from the study, "we have finished our lessons, and are all going to the Grange! 'tis a delightful morning, do put on your cloak, and let's be off: the birds sing as blithe as summer, and the sun sparkles like spangles on the river: do pray be quick, and I will go hasten mama and Ellen."

Rosa was left in the nursery, and Dr.

Moreland accompanied the happy party from the vicarage. "Ah! there is old William," exclaimed Percival, as they approached the lodge; "I will be there first;" and away he bounded, Stanley and Ellen pursuing him. "Who is old William?" asked Antonia, as her eyes followed the children. "The noblest work of God—an honest man," replied the doctor—who has experienced affliction without despair, and prosperity without exultation. To the benevolence of my beloved and excellent pupil, Mr. Dauverne, he is indebted for his present comfortable situation of lodge-porter to the Grange; and that little residence is a sanctuary for himself and daughter."

Antonia now encountered the venerable William, surrounded by the lovely group—his hat was in his hand, and his hair, bleached by many winters, shone like silver in the sun-beams.

"How gratifying to the human heart, is age, rendered respectable by industry and virtue!" said Mrs. Moreland, gazing on the objects before her. "What a pleasing picture!" exclaimed the delighted father, regardless of her observation: "look, Margaret, see yon interesting contrast, mark the ardour of youthful energy in the countenances of our darlings, and the calm, steady serenity, pourtrayed in the furrowed features of yon respected man. How different is youth and age!—In the former, Hope smiles upon us, and, even in the hours of sorrow, solaces us with the promises of returning peace. But when age, like the hoary frost, benumbs our faculties and destroys our vigour, life ceases her promises, and happiness in this world must then be drawn from retrospection. I fear the children are troublesome," he continued, pausing at the gate. "Heaven bless them!" replied William humbly bow-

ing; "I love to hear their little tongues, and to see them look so hearty." "But how fares the rheumatism, my old friend? and how is Mary?" asked Mrs. Moreland. At the sound of her voice, a delicate interesting girl appeared at the door, and dropped a rustic courtesy. In a few minutes they proceeded across the park, and as the children ran before, Antonia inquired how long William had held his present situation. "About two years," said the doctor; "I have often heard him repeat his artless tale. It was then, that providence conducted Dauverne to his assistance, and snatched him from penury and sorrow, to plenty and peace. As that philanthropic young man was riding through Atherston, the summer before last, his attention was arrested by the excessive agitation of a young girl, Mary, whom you have just seen, conversing with a person at the door of an apo-

thecary's shop. Her tears and sobs were so violent, that Dauverne, whose heart is ever alive to distress, immediately slackened his pace. 'For mercy's sake, Sir,' implored the girl, 'do come—oh such a dreadful, dreadful accident!' 'An accident,' eagerly interrupted the person she was addressing; 'how? where? to whom? An accident, and I not there. Hollo! John—Thomas—haste! run! bring hither my hat—An accident,' he again repeated, turning to Mary; 'what a carriage overturned, and—' 'Alas, no!' she replied with a fresh shower of tears. 'My poor dear father has fallen from a ladder, and broken his leg.' 'Is that all?' said the disappointed son of Æsculapius. 'I can't help it—I am sorry for it—that is—I can't attend now—it is but a moment ago since I was summoned to the manor-house. Return home, and the first hour I am at leisure, I will call at

the cottage." The unhappy girl cast on him a look which must have reached his heart, if he had had one; but with the most perfect indifference, he retired, closing after him the door of his shop, and the suppliant turned mournfully away. 'Unfeeling wretch!' exclaimed Dawverne, springing from his horse, and dispatching his servant in search of the nearest surgeon. 'Can the form of man enshrine a heart so callous to humanity?' In an instant he was at her side. 'Where do you live, my poor girl?' he inquired in the mildest accents; 'conduct me to your father, perhaps I may be able to serve him.' Mary, unaccustomed to professions so tender, pronounced in an unknown voice, turned her full eyes upon him; a crimson blush died her countenance, and her only answer was a grateful flood of tears. "Poor girl!" murmured Antonia, wiping away the pearly drops

of sympathy. "Heaven, in the form of Mr. Dauverne, sent a compassionating angel to comfort and uphold thee." Mrs. Moreland smiled.—The doctor proceeded, "Again Dauverne importuned, and soon in broken unconnected sentences, learnt that the unfortunate William, in pursuing his daily occupation of a gardener, had fallen from a ladder and had broken his leg—Mary had been dispatched for a surgeon, and the mother and son remained to witness the agonies of the patient sufferer. From this period, William and his family became the peculiar charge of Dauverne; and having gained the most unquestionable references as to his character and disposition, on the death of the late porter, through his recommendation, William was appointed by the Marquis of Allingthorn to succeed to the situation, and James became the groom of his benefactor."

The doctor ceased—Antonia spoke not—every expression had sunk deep into her soul; she mused on the little story of old William—on the beneficence of Dauverne, until he became a visionary object of esteem, nay, almost adoration. "Happy, happy, Lady Geraldine!" she mentally sighed; "to possess the heart of a being, so virtuous, so unvitiated; which like gold passing the fiery ordeal, shines brighter when purified from the dross of composition:—a heart, which nobly stemming the torrent of gaiety, fashion, and temptation, retains its native steadiness, its virtues." "Poor Hannah," said Mrs. Moreland, breaking the thread of Antonia's reflections, "lived but a twelve month to proclaim her benefits. I was with her when she died; and never shall I forget the sobs of anguish which burst from the tortured bosoms of William and Mary: Dauverne, and my good

man, mustered their whole stock of eloquence to preach composure. The bereaved widower for three weeks was confined to his bed; and during this long struggle between reason and affliction, his benefactor visited his pillow, and poured into his bleeding wounds the balm of commiseration."

"Excellent young man!" ardently repeated Antonia; "can the Lady Geraldine prefer the frivolity of fashion to the approbation of sterling worth?"

"It is even so," gravely replied Mrs. Moreland, "and I fearfully shudder, lest the peace of our deserving favourite should be wrecked on the rocks of dissipation."

The party had now reached the mansion, and leaving Antonia to ramble through the elegantly furnished apartments, be it our task to describe its situation and appearance. The Grange was a noble pile of building, sited on a rising ground, and environed by an

extensive park: long had it been the favourite residence of the Allingthorn family, for it was one of the estates, that, with the title, descended to posterity. Its exterior was bold, lofty, and magnificent; its interior commodious, rich, and elegant; formed of grey stone, it peeped from the bosom of surrounding woods which embellished the upland country, and whose deep umbrageous recesses, might have tempted the holy anchorite there to fix his abode. The Avon's pure waters rolled widening through the grounds; and a grove of weeping willows, drooping o'er a small fishing house, seemed to kiss the flood. Verdant fields spread their rich pastures on the opposite side, and closed with the distant view of Mien and Malvern hills, rising boldly behind the villages of Bidford and Barton, now tinged with the radiant sun-beams, and wrapt

in the blue æther of evening. The sloping garden, rich with deciduous and hardy perennial shrubs, closed only at the water's edge; and the light pleasure boat, and commercial barge, presenting to the eye vivid objects of animation, stole softly up the stream. Often in commemoration of a rustic wedding would the sound of the village bells fill the balmy gale; softening as they floated, and dying in distant echoes! Fine clumps of elm, chesnut, mountain ash, and acacia, adorned the park, beneath whose spreading branches the playful deer reclined unmolested. In short, flowering lawns, cultivated heights, temples, grottos, shrubberies, alternately saluted the eye; for natu e and art had here united to complete a perfect Paradise. Antonia, delighted with objects so new and so enchanting (for till her arrival in England nature in her wildest garb had presented it-

self), gazed from the window; and not until Percival had thrice called her did she enter the library. "That is the resemblance of Mr. Dauverne, Miss Forrester," said Dr. Moreland, directing her attention to the portrait of a very handsome young man. "It was taken for him a few weeks previous to his commencing his travels, and is universally allowed to be a strong likeness, and a capital performance." Antonia's eyes instinctively rested on the features, o'er which a cast of thought, a pleasing pensiveness, was pourtrayed, which seemed consonant to her own feelings. Wrapt in admiration she forgot every other object, and with a half-smothered sigh articulated, "Virtue has, indeed, stamped her image on the canvass." "I would not trust my self-commanding pupil with that exclamation," said the doctor, laughing; "lest vanity, in spite of reason, should run away with his

sence." Antonia felt the impropriety of what she had uttered, and a deep blush died her countenance. "I feel—I perceive," she at length murmured, taking the hand of Mrs. Moreland, "that in England we must wear restraint—we must not speak the dictates of out hearts; and in future, I will endeavour to conform myself to its customs." Mrs. Moreland raised her fair hand to her lips, and gazed delighted on the artless speaker. "I trust you will yet change your opinion of our country, my sweet Antonia," she replied; "believe me, though *deception* often sways the world of *fashion*, sincerity, the child of innocence and virtue, shuns not our favoured isle." "That is the portrait of Lady Geraldine," said the doctor, pointing to one which hung next to Dauverne's. "May I say she is beautiful?" inquired Antonia. "Certainly, say ever what you think." "Why

then," she returned, her eyes again resting on Dauverne's, "I think there is not half the fervour, half the expression, or half the interest there is to be found here." "But she is beautiful," he observed. "Very, very beautiful," repeated Antonia.

She acknowledged the merit of each portrait which met her eyes; but ever and anon were they turned on Dauverne's, for none other possessed the spell there inshrined. During this conversation, the children were minutely examining a grand harp which stood in one corner of the library, and Ellen eagerly approaching Antonia, said, "can you play?" Being answered in the affirmative, she led her towards the instrument, where for more than an hour, by her exquisite skill, she entranced the senses of her delighted auditors. The tones drawn forth were so deep, so soft, so impressive, that imperceptibly they stole

upon the heart, tinctured the ideas with melancholy, and taught the tear to flow, whose source could scarce be traced. Her own thoughts rested on Lady Geraldine—her eyes were turned to the portrait of Dauverne; and her fingers as they swept the full chords, trembled with unknown emotion:—suddenly she stopped, her cheek was moist as the lily surcharged with dew: she beheld the anxious glance of Mrs. Moreland, and more effectually to conceal her agitation, hastily struck up a lively air—it had the desired end; composure was restored to her bosom, and she returned to the vicarage without suspecting the cause of her sensations. But no sooner had she regained the solitude of her chamber, than memory dwelt on the relation of Dr. Moreland. "Ah, gracious Heaven," she ejaculated, "what a heart has this Dauverne! how every tongue couples his name with blessings, and

his actions with veneration! Surely," and she raised her clasped hands, "such active virtues must be more acceptable in the eyes of the Creator, than that negative calm, that supine innocence, which marks the actions of the devotee, whose life passes like a sky, unclouded by showers, unruffled by temptations.

CHAP. IV.

The weather was uncommonly fine, and the first few days of Antonia's residence at the vicarage glided swiftly away, unmarked by any incident, save the increasing confidence, affection, and esteem which each member of this amiable family felt towards their new inmate: and Antonia, whose grateful heart was ever tremblingly alive to the slightest advances of friendship, imbibed, in return for the good doctor and his excellent partner, a reverence, a regard which time or circumstances could never weaken. Sometimes, accompanied by doctor and Mrs. Moreland, sometimes by the children, our heroine, invited by the genial softness of spring, explored the picturesque scenery which surrounded the vicarage:

now gazing on the liquid margin of the Avon, meandering swiftly o'er its pebbled bed, and now upon the varying wood-crowned landscape, which, diversified by the pleasing embellishments of light and shade, received and administered animation to the various forms of nature, which by perpetually chequering the aspect rendered her sober livery always interesting. The harebell and violet unfolded their humble beauties, and scattered their fragrant sweets to the passing gale, and the clear and mellow note of the blackbird, and the shrill warbling of the lark echoed from the recesses of the woody dells: nature spread a verdant carpet beneath their feet, and poured from her bounteous store the choicest blossoms: troops of village children met on the enamelled meed like

"A sportive train
To gather king-cups
And prink their hair with daisies."

And the scattered cottages seen in distance exhibited to the discerning eye rich scenes of contentment, industry, and peace.

The little Percival, culling the sweetest flowers to grace the bosom of his favourite, would retain his station by her side, while Stanley and his sisters, eagerly pursuing their sports, chased each other through the entangling brush-wood, or o'er the far spreading lawn. "I am sure," said the rosy faced boy, following the eyes of Antonia as they wandered over the silvan scenery, "you will love Mr. Dauverne, for he is so like you." Antonia smiled: "so charitable, and so good," continued the artless child; "and then he is such a friend to old William, and to all in trouble, that everybody blesses him: and when poor Hannah died he sat by the bed side and talked to William and comforted him, just as if he had been his son;

and papa says there are very few of his rank and age who would have done so." "Indeed, I fear there is," replied Antonia; "but though so much older, I am as great a novice as yourself, my love, in the ways of the world; but virtue, I have ever been taught, bears its reward, and Mr. Dauverne, in promoting the comfort of others, ensures his own felicity." "Yes, yes," exclaimed Percival, "but won't you love him?" "I hope so," she replied; "we should love every one who is good." "So papa says; but shall I tell him you will love him? it will make him so happy." "Happy!" repeated Antonia, blushing, "how can the love of a stranger make him happy?" "Because," resumed the unconscious boy, "when he comes to the vicarage he seems delighted to find that we remember him; and if our love can give him pleasure, surely your's, who is ever so

kind and so good, must make him happy." Antonia laughed at the artless reasoning of Percival, and returned home more than ever enraptured with her young favourite.

On the following morning, as the little Rosa reclined in the arms of Antonia, her glowing cheek pressed on her bosom, and the glossy curls of her flaxen hair sporting round her innocent face and falling on the snowy arm which encircled her, Percival standing by their side, his dark eyes with animated attention resting on the expressive features of his new friend, while at his feet lay his favourite Daphne, and, to complete the group, the *beautiful* puppy playing on the carpet with the laughing Ellen—the door opened, and Dr. Moreland, followed by a stranger, entered. The exclamations of joy which burst from the lips of the children, as with open arms they flew to welcome the visitor, declared him

to be a friend, and the succeeding moment the excellent, the tender, the benevolent Dauverne, to whose praise she had so often listened, and of whose character she was already an unconscious admirer, was presented to her notice by his gratified tutor.

Antonia raised her eyes to his face, and beheld in the friend the preserver of William and his family, the most benign, the most impressive, the most commanding form she ever beheld. His features, more animated than handsome, glowed with the ruddy bloom of health; and his dark penetrating eyes, now melting in softness, now beaming intelligence, reflected, as a mirror, every movement of his soul. His figure was tall and elegant, and, though moulded by the polish of politeness, possessed that stamp of dignity and conscious firmness which defies the inroads of folly and prevalence of fashion—which seems to skim

lightly o'er the surface of pleasure without vitiating the taste by excessive indulgence: and as the tall skiff, cutting through the briny wave, leaves but a momentary trace, and is seen no more. "Ah heaven!" mentally ejaculated Antonia, as her eyes again sought the expressive countenance of Dauverne—

"How few, like thee, inquire the wretched out,
And court the offices of soft humanity,
Or mix their pitying tears with those who weep!"

"When may we expect the Marquis of Allingthorn in Warwickshire?" inquired Dr. Moreland. "Not till the latter end of next month," said Dauverne. "I left them immerged in dissipation and all the time-killing pursuits of the *haut ton*, Lady Geraldine, following the phantom pleasure as eagerly as ever child did a gaudy butterfly. The Grange is to be filled with company; and there and at St. Antholine's we are to have private

theatricals, masked balls, and heaven knows what besides; all at the instigation and under the immediate inspection of this fair leader of fashion and notoriety. And on the sabbath, because the customs of our ancestors are to be exploded by all *civilized* society, a grand concert of vocal and instrumental performers is to be held, where *dilitantis,* intimate, *dearly beloved* friends, amounting to four or five hundred, are *alone* to be invited." "Oh, fie, fie!" gravely repeated Dr. Moreland; "what must we expect when our nobility, our legislators set the example of immorality, and so flagrantly break the laws so sacredly given?"

Antonia gazed with astonishment on the doctor; he read the doubts passing in her mind. "You look surprised, Miss Forrester," he continued, forcing a smile; "remember I told you you had much to learn." "If ever the human countenance pourtrayed the

index of the mind," exclaimed Dauverne, his eyes intently resting on the fair features of Antonia, "the heart of Miss Forrester can never assimilate with the *votaries of fashion.*" Antonia bowed to the compliment, whilst a transient blush suffused her cheek. "But what thinks the marquis?" again questioned the doctor. "I believe 'tis all one," replied Dauverne. "Where, then, is the influence of her affianced lord? Could not the powers of persuasion reclaim her?" Dauverne started from his chair, breathed a deep sigh, and walked precipitately to the window. "You judge of others by yourself, my love," said Mrs. Moreland, who had entered the room a few moments before, and appeared not to notice the strong emotion of Dauverne: "but should we not make some allowance for the force of habit and the prevalence of example?" "True," he replied, gratefully pressing her hand;

"but in my blessing centres my excuse—in the mother of my children bounteous heaven has given me such goodness, such virtue, that I forget every female breast contains not a heart alike excellent as my Margaret's; and for her sake I would willingly regard the whole sex."

Mrs. Moreland smiled at the gallant speech of her husband; and turning, beheld with surprise the sweet features of Antonia overshadowed with dejection: her head rested on her arm, and her eyes were fixed on the window at which stood Dauverne: so deep was her reverie that she perceived not the notice she attracted; she beheld him unhappy, she knew his worth, and pitied his afflictions:—her enthusiastic soul pictured in him a being superior to the rest of mankind, and shuddered at the garb of sorrow in which a heart of such fancied purity was decked. "Would I had never

quitted St. Eustacia!" she sighed: "here the most excellent, the most irreproachable are exposed to sorrow —here we behold, even in perfection, the prototype of human misery. There every countenance bears the smile of peaceful security and unbroken innocence—there no busy stimulative gives a zest to the various scenes of life, and rouses the mental powers into action: the devoted novice quietly slumbers in the lap of religious sanctuary, 'the world forgetting by the world forgot." "Antonia!" said Mrs. Moreland; she started, a deepening scarlet died her countenance; Dauverne turned, and his admiring eyes rested on the softened assemblage of female loveliness. Alas! how different from the self-important beauty, Lady Geraldine, claiming the homage of every beholder as an offering due to her charms: she, as the full rose, expanding its fragrance to the sun-beams, dazzled the eyes and capti-

vated the senses of each cursory passer; while Antonia, like the modest lily, the pure emblem of chastity, shrinking from every unhallowed touch beneath its protecting foliage, evaded the ardent gaze, and, rich in delicacy and tremulous diffidence, possessed the

"Pure chastity, reddening as it mov'd along,
Disorder'd at the deep regard it draws."

"The morning is inviting, the breeze blows fresh from the south," said Dr. Moreland; "suppose we walk to the Grange and acquaint the housekeeper with the intended return of the marquis." Antonia rose to seek her hat. "Ah, do let us," exclaimed the delighted Percival, "and perhaps dear Miss Forrester will play another tune on that beautiful harp." "And me too, mama," lisped Rosa. "No, my child," said Mrs. Moreland; "you cannot walk so far." "Then I will carry her," exclaimed

Dauverne, snatching the little cherub in his arms. Rosa's chubby hands were thrown round his neck, and a grateful kiss declared her thanks. "You have indeed most unequivocally removed the objection," resumed the fond mother, smiling; "but there is yet another," looking at her husband: "we may perhaps be late, and little Rosa must then be admitted to our dinner party." "Very well, my love," said the doctor, "we will welcome the young visitor."

Thus arranged they quitted the vicarage; the children running before chased the deer from their covers and laughed at the sportive gambols of the playful fawns: while Dauverne, pausing at the porter's lodge, inquired after William and his family. The eyes of the good old man glistened as he answered the questions of his benefactor, and his lips in grateful ecstasy proclaimed his kindness. "Come,

come, no more of this," said Dauverne, turning hastily away; "unmerited praise, Miss Forrester," he continued, retaking his station at her side, "is a tacit kind of reproach which humbles a man's vanity, and places before his eyes the various opportunities he has missed of being serviceable to his fellow creatures." "But merited and unfeigned praise," she timidly replied, "is a tribute which grateful indigence must ever offer to benevolence and acknowledged worth." "From such lips," said Dauverne, bowing, "even flattery must be pleasing." "Ah, how you mistake me!" fervently interrupted Antonia, as a tear rushed to her eye. "I have lived too short a period in the *great world* to have imbibed the art." "Charming simplicity! sweet child of innocence and nature!" he murmured; then turning, "Pardon me, Miss Forrester, to the partial representation of my

friends I am indebted for that good opinion it shall ever be my proudest boast to retain." "Do pray," said Percival, meeting them at the saloon door, "come to the library—how slow you must have walked! we have been waiting for you so long; and mama has taken off the covering of the harp. Do pray come," snatching her hand, and hastening forward. "Upon my word," said Dauverne, laughing, "you are a most magnanimous hero, Percival, and would grace the page of chivalry: what, run away with a young lady, and force her to sing for liberty: a pretty tale to tell your good father." "Hah! here she is—now do sing," exclaimed the children, as the delighted boy led her to the instrument. The harmony of her voice, which nature in her softest sweetest strains had modulated, was particularly adapted to the harp; and with the elegant correctness of a scien-

tific performer she swept the full chords, and warbled Mrs. Opie's pathetic ballad of "Poor Mary Ann."

Dauverne, transfixed in admiration, gazed on the lovely songstress, until the seraphic tones had ceased, and then raised his eyes to the portrait of Lady Geraldine with an expression of dissatisfaction and melancholy. "How does my sweet Selina bear all this gaiety?" asked Mrs. Moreland, as they proceeded towards the fishing-house. "Ah, poor Selina!" said Dauverne, smiling; "her countenance tells tales—late hours and dissipation has robbed her cheeks of their roses, and rendered her as pale, as thin, and as nervous as any fine lady in the purlieus of St. James's." "And does Lady Geraldine, in spite of those two formidable foes to beauty, retain her bloom?" said the doctor. "How can you ask the question, my good Sir?" replied Dauverne. "A dash-

ing *belle* lose her bloom in London? impossible. There are too many *daily advertisers*, too many *ingenious contrivers* to supply the deficiency. No, no, Geraldine outwits nature. As yet, Selina is but a novice; but another winter passed in the metropolis under the guidance of her admired sister will complete her education." Dr. Moreland shook his head, while Antonia looked inquisitively towards him. "You would dive into my thoughts, Miss Forrester," said he, in replying to the expressive scrutiny; "you would solve the ambiguous meaning conveyed in my young friend's inuendo. Why then you must know that every *downy complexion* which meets the admiring eye, every *glowing bloom*, every *snowy forehead* is not, like your own, the bounteous bequest of heaven; but gleamed from *foreign customs* and *man's invention*, frequently, like lacker, glosses over the time-beaten visage,

impressed too strongly with the pale sickly stamp of dissipation."

Start not, gentle reader, that amazement superseded curiosity in the intelligent countenance of Antonia, though educated in Italy, where the custom is universal; yet remember, I have before observed, she had never left the confines of her convent; and her artless unaffected expressions called forth smiles of admiration from the company. For the first time in his life Dauverne beheld a being sensible, accomplished, angelic; yet pure as white robed innocence, meek as humility's self, and unconscious of her superior excellence: a being who judged erring mortality by the standard of her own heart—who suspected not the disguise, and smiled a tacit reproof on the conscious deceiver. He gazed on her as though she had just descended from another world, graced with the stamp of truth and the

office of beneficence: he forgot Lady Geraldine; he forgot every tie but inclination, and his whole soul expanded with new-born sentiment.

Dangerous licence of indulgence! dear-bought moments of ecstacy! how soon were they dissipated! How soon did reason regain its momentary annihilation, and subdue the first impulse of prepossession!

"It was here," remarked Dr. Moreland, addressing Dauverne, "when, quite youths, you and Sir Frederic passed the hours of recreation in shooting moor-hens. Well do I remember the day you quarrelled with the sport." "I am by no means implacable," said Dauverne; "yet have I never resumed the amusement." "Surely, the reasons must have been strong," observed Mrs. Moreland. "Many would not dignify it by the appellation of *reason*," he replied, "but would scruple not to term it weakness. When a

youth, I was excessively fond of animals, and paid unceasing attention to their several wants. Chance threw in my way a beautiful pair of ring-doves. I purchased them, and ran to present my newly-acquired treasure to Geraldine."---"Geraldine!" repeated Mrs. Moreland.---"You appear surprised, my dear Madam," he rejoined; "but at the period of which I am speaking, Geraldine knew but in theory the term fashion, and would sport with me on the lawn, or aid my voluntary employs with unaffected good-humour.

"But to resume my story. The birds became so tame, that they would coo at my approach, eat out of my hand, perch upon my shoulder, and return with interest my caresses. Now mark the fickle contrarieties of youth. At the instigation of my friend Stanley, I took to the sports of the field, and all at once shooting became a favourite amusement. One morning, when I

had just deposited an unfortunate moor-hen in my bag, and reladen my fusee, a bird hovered over head. I lost not a moment, took my aim, and, without observing the victim, fired. I traced its fall, and beheld at my feet, fluttering, panting, dying, one of my favourite doves. I will not say that I wept over it; but I may truly state, that a tear of pity and regret fell upon the feathers. I took it carefully up; but ere I reached the Grange, it had expired. My still remaining favourite pined at the loss of her mate: in a week I lost both my doves, and with them fled my taste for shooting."

Dauverne ceased; Antonia's eyes were fixed upon him with an expression of admiration: she thought of the doves—she thought of William; but she thought more of his benefactor. Every instant confirmed more strongly her prepossession: when she heard him speak, she listened with fixed at-

tention, with an unbreathing earnestness, as though his lips, conveying the oracles of truth, poured the balm of instruction into her unconscious heart. Alas, poor Antonia! the image of Dauverne was already there implanted; and ere yet she defined the meaning of love, the sly deity had stolen into her bosom, tinctured all her future moments, and rendered her one of his warmest votaries.

The children had reached the fishing-house, and little Rosa stood smiling at the top of the steps. It was a small white oblong building, hanging over the river, upon a kind of projecting point, whose waters, leaving the base, rippled o'er their pebbled bed, and caused a monotonous sound, far from discordant to the contemplative ear. The interior was fancifully decorated; and the approach was impervious to the eye, from the sombre shade of the pensive willow, cypress,

and various evergreens by which it was surrounded.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Stanley, "I wish I had my rod: how delightful it would be to throw the line from this window!"—"I see nothing very delightful, either," said Ellen; "it is so cold and so gloomy."—"You are right, Ellen; you are right," said Percival: "I would a thousand times rather be at home, running with you and Rosa about the garden; or feeding the robins——" "Or playing with Daphne, or chasing butterflies," rejoined Stanley, smiling: "'tis well we don't all think alike."

Dauverne was pointing out to Antonia the varied landscape, which, stretching its rich and extensive beauties, met the eye on every side: he heard not the discourse of the children; he only heard her remarks, her expressions of admiration, and her grateful reverence to the God of nature; and

not until the voice of Dr. Moreland, proposing their return to the vicarage, awakened recollection, did he perceive there were others present. Ere they had crossed the park, Rosa complained of being weary, and, according to the specified agreement, she soon reclined in Dauverne's arms. "How few there are," said the delighted mother, gazing on her blooming cherub, "who would, like that excellent young man, be troubled with such a burden; and yet, was he to meet a whole swarm of fashionable loungers, so far from shrinking from their ridicule, and depositing his charge, he would hold her triumphantly towards them, and boast that he could be useful."—"Virtue, Margaret," observed her husband, "is never painted with the blush of false shame; and Dauverne's superiority to the sarcasms and inuendos of that worthless part of the creation, will ever, or I know him not, refute their

ridicule by cool perseverance and unshaken honour."—"I hear my name freely animadverted on," said Dauverne, who had stopped behind to gather a violet for Rosa; "and I think 'tis fair I should be made acquainted with the subject of discussion, that I may boldly confront the charge, and assert my justification. Come, you shall be the arbitrator, amiable Miss Forrester; for your looks bespeak mercy."—"And yet," replied Antonia, archly, "should I undertake the office, may not my decision be termed *flattery*?"

Dauverne smiled at the insinuation. "Remember," he exclaimed, "what I before said: *flattery from* your *lips must be pleasing*."—"If that sentence had been uttered by Sir Frederic," said Dr. Moreland, laughing, "I should not have felt surprised."—"What, then, my dear Sir," he inquired, "is gallantry to extend no further

than Sir Frederic? There are few of our sex, and here I may venture to add," bowing to Mrs. Moreland and Antonia, "much fewer of your's, who would admit of the restriction."

The children, who had already reached the vicarage, now returned, their features animated, and their eyes dancing with eloquent joy. "What is the matter, my loves?" asked their father: "what has happened? What news?"—"Oh! so kind! so delightful! I shall never, never be tired," exclaimed Percival.—"Nor I either," said Stanley and Ellen.—"Let me go," articulated Rosa, struggling for freedom.

Dauverne placed her on the lawn, and away she bounded. "Oh dear! oh dear!" lisped the little girl, returning, and meeting them at the hall-door: "the music——how kind! how good!" clasping the knees of Dauverne. "This is all an enigma to me," said Mrs.

Moreland;" and if I may judge by your countenance, even you, Antonia, are not admitted into the secret."—"It will not long remain one," said Dauverne, smiling.—"No, no," drily replied the doctor, "there are too many intrusted."

Led by the children, they entered the study, where, in a kind of recess, stood the harp upon which Antonia had been playing. "This is an agreeable surprise, indeed!" said the doctor. "A most delightful acquisition!" exclaimed Mrs. Moreland—"so kindly thought of, so delicately executed! Indeed, my good friend," turning to Dauverne, "you have a grace, so peculiar to yourself, that while I remember your politeness, your excellence, and your virtue, I shall never feel at a loss for a model worthy the imitation of my children."—Spare me, my dear Madam," he replied: "you know not how little I merit these encomiums.

Believe me, I am not so disinterested as you imagine. The gratification of hearing Miss Forrester's exquisite performance was the first inducement."

Antonia bowed: she could not speak, but her eyes expressed her sentiments. Every syllable she had heard—every turn of his countenance—every look—every action, served but to fan the flame; or, rather, it was like pouring oil upon a consuming fire. Antonia loved; yet she knew it not. To possess the esteem, the confidence, the respect of Dauverne, was her chief ambition—her highest hope; and as this new-born sentiment gradually gained ground, her once-ardent desire of returning to the Convent of St. Eustacia diminished. Solitude had lost its power to please: a life dedicated to religion had ceased to captivate. Every charm seemed concentrated in the vicarage; and she looked forward to the arrival of the Marquis of Allingthorn,

and her removal to the Grange, with a sickening kind of sensation, which seemed to forebode disquietude and disappointment.

CHAP. V.

So congenial was this visit to the soul of Dauverne, that, in the society of the inmates of the vicarage, the hours fled rapidly away, and in the presence of Antonia reflection was banished. The excellence of her heart confirmed by daily observation; the winning softness of her manners; the interesting *naïveté* of her conversation; and the exquisite loveliness of her countenance, which varying each moment, reflected her ideas, stole on his senses, and conveyed a poison which each interview repeated—which each interview rendered more irremediable. Lady Geraldine, his rich, affianced bride, had never awakened the sensations he now experienced—never had she by little delicate attentions, neces-

sary to the peace of a lover, sought to ensure a heart which ought to have been her highest prize. Alas! unlike himself, homage and admiration was her aim, and her ear was ever open to the voice of flattery and the professions of adulation. Ever, until he beheld Antonia, had he silently acquiesced in the decision of his friends; had he beheld his cousin with a negative kind of feeling, which neither spurned the gift, nor courted the possession—which neither awakened jealousy at the smiles which every fashionable beau excited, or inspired rapture at any casual attention. He heard thousands envying his felicity, without being able to appreciate it; and wondered that the world should call him happy, when in fact he was barely content. In the visits of charity, and the offices of benevolence, she never shared his toil; nay, she would laugh with those sons of luxury, who would stake hundreds on

the turn of a straw, and yet when called upon to succour a fellow creature, would declare they were *too poor* to give to beggars. Her disposition, naturally good, had been perverted by example; and if a tale of affliction touched her heart, she would turn aside her head, ashamed of the tear it had excited. She disliked Dr. Moreland, because he ever spoke the unvarnished truth, because he hid not her faults, but ridiculed the dupes of fashion, and condemned the false and dangerous system. She disliked his family, because they were too proud to accept her patronage, and too humble to envy her grandeur. She derided the restraints of parental authority, and in defiance of conscience, broke down every barrier, because she was independent. The opinion of her father was laughed at, and the admonitions of her mother scorned. She loved her sister, because she rivalled her not in

fortune or in wit. She smiled on Dauverne, because he was handsome, and because, through him, she would one day grace the peerage. Routs, balls, masquerades, were the theatres of delight; and when in the summer, in compliance with fashion, she retired to the country, it was only to inveigh against its solitude, and sigh for the returning season, again to blazon forth all her charms in London. Such was Lady Geraldine—such the being, whom destiny, in sport, had marked out for the companion of Dauverne. The direct contrast, in the artless and unadorned person of Antonia, which hourly presented itself to his eyes, was a temptation too dazzling for human nature to resist; and what began in admiration, imperceptibly glided into esteem—into rapture—into love. Relying on his own integrity, and for a while unwilling to believe the source of his feelings, he suffered inclination

to take the reins, and by the most assiduous attentions, by the most ingenious devices, called forth the strength and energy of a mind, which modest diffidence had concealed. Each moment was marked by some new excellence—each moment more firmly riveted the chain which love had forged, in spite of duty, in defiance of controul. Thus slumbering in the security of concealment, a week had already passed, and Dauverne thought not of his departure. Another day, and another day, glided swiftly on, when Mrs. Moreland laughingly inquired, whether Lady Geraldine would not wonder at his absence. He started, his colour heightened, and the sudden pain at his heart gave a name to his sensations, his eyes involuntarily sought Antonia; she was standing at the window, and an unusual paleness seemed to pervade her features.

"I warrant, my fair cousin

do me so much honour," he at length replied, with an assumed air of cheerfulness. "Mr. Sunderland, Colonel Askerman, and several other fashionables, will duly compensate for my loss." "You are too diffident," rejoined Mrs. Moreland; "but those who know your worth, have a better opinion of Lady Geraldine's discernment. What say you, my sweet young friend," turning to Antonia, "in a similar situation, would your heart acquit him?"

This unfortunate address mantled the face and bosom of Antonia with scarlet; she could not speak—her agitation was inconceivable, and more effectually to veil her emotion, she stooped, under the pretence of regaining a myrtle sprig she had dropped. "Miss Forrester never can be in the situation you premise," replied Dauverne, warmly, "for her heart is too good, ever to trifle with the peace of

the happy, envied being, it may select." "Ah, jealousy, jealousy!" gaily repeated Mrs. Moreland, "that blush bespeaks you guilty. At last I find you are mortal, for notwithstanding my good man's panegyrics, I have discovered a fault." "You may doubtless discover many," he replied, in the same strain, "though to the present accusation I plead innocent." "Of what crime may you stand arraigned?" inquired Dr. Moreland, who entered the room as he concluded the last sentence. "Of that 'green eyed monster,' jealousy, my dear Sir," said Dauverne. "And who may be the supposed instigators of the passion?" again questioned the doctor. "The Honourable Mr. Sunderland, and the magnanimous Colonel Askerman." he replied, laughing. "Well, Margaret," resumed her husband, "you have given convincing proof that you know not the persons al-

luded to, for Mr. Sonderland, with all due submission to the dignified stalk from which he springs, is a spendthrift; and Colonel Askerman, a coxcomb." "Nay, I don't mean to insinuate that there is the slightest shadow of reason," said Mrs. Moreland, "but 'who loves,' you know, 'must fear.'" "Not always, either, Margaret," observed the doctor; "witness ourselves; I think I could trust you for whole hours with such an assemblage of heroes, without once admitting a doubt." "True, but would you have done so before we were married?" "Or else, my love, be assured you would not have been my wife; for never could I have confided my peace to a woman who possessed not my confidence." "Well, well, I find I am fairly driven off the field; for even my expected ally," glancing good-humouredly at Antonia, "proves a neutral power." "Me, my dear

madam," faltered the confused girl, "were you not speaking of—of——" Lady Geraldine's marriage with Mr. Dauverne, she would have added, but her lips refused utterance, and the lily chased the rose from her complexion. "I believe, if the truth were known," rejoined Mrs. Moreland, "you had recrossed the ocean, and forgotten us altogether: come, confess, were you not with St. Eustacia's superior, and your favourite nun, Sister Benedicta?"

As Antonia opened her lips to pronounce a simple negative, the crimson tide again returned, and dappled her fair cheek with scarlet. "You must, my dear child, gain some command over those tell-tale features, before you mix with the great world," she continued, "or really you will excite Lady Geraldine's raillery." "Miss Forrester has only to show herself," interrupted Dauverne, "to excite envy." "Nay, nay, that is not fair,"

said Mrs. Moreland; "the present ought never to be complimented at the expence of the absent. Nature we will allow has been profuse."—"And art," warmly rejoined Dauverne, "on the other side, I am sure has kept pace."

The doctor nodded significantly, while Antonia, confused and blushing, sought a retreat in the garden. "What may be the subject of Miss Forrester's cogitations?" inquired Dauverne, joining her in the filbert walk. "Surely, it must be interesting when it so fully absorbs her thoughts!" The subject, she might have answered, was *yourself*; for her every idea rested on the affianced marriage, and with regret, she dwelt on the apparent unworthiness of the happy, the favoured bride. "I was thinking," she replied with a forced smile, "of a being I have never seen—of the beautiful and accomplished Lady Geraldine."

Dauverne answered not; his eyes rested mournfully on his companion, as if to draw comparisons between her and his destined wife; and not till they had passed through a private gate which led into the park, was the silence dissolved. At length, with a heavy sigh, he spoke of the marquis's intended visit to the Grange. "And then," he continued, "quiet and repose will be chased from these silent shades; the reign of mistaken pleasure will prevail, and rationality and contemplation will vanish: the loved haunts of my youth will be profaned by the unhallowed voice of folly, and wherever I turn, the knell of departed peace will mock me." "Good heaven, what a picture!" exclaimed the astonished girl: "surely, prejudice must be the incentive," she was going to add, but the dejection of his countenance prevented her. Often had she observed a melancholy expression steal

over his features; an expression which seemed to say—"I am unhappy," but which she attributed rather to the sadness of sentiment, than the effects of real grief:—but now to doubt would be folly; some secret uneasiness certainly pressed upon his spirits, for his every accent breathed sorrow. That a being so exemplary should experience woe, was a problem to Antonia: guilt, she knew, produced anguish; but that virtue should endure affliction, she had yet to learn. "How many candidates, Miss Forrester," continued Dauverne, regardless of her exclamation, "will arise, to struggle for the invaluable prize of your heart! How many will rue the day, that presented to their admiring gaze such perfection, for to one alone can you 'stint the flame.' Oh, happy, thrice blessed being!" he pursued in hurried accents, "who in your bosom shall first inspire love." Antonia looked

with astonishment towards him, whilst he, perusing the expression of her countenance, continued — "Pardon me, Miss Forrester, if my interest in the cause of innocence carries me too far; believe me, 'tis the anxiety I feel for your happiness, that whispers, not one of the beings graced with the stamp of fashion merits the election." "Do not fear," said the unconscious girl, "though a novice in the world, I am not in its pursuits; for Sister Benedicta cautioned me before I left Italy." "Of what did she caution you?" questioned Dauverne. "Say, may I be so bold as to inquire?" "Against flattery," she timidly replied, "and against credulity." "And will her lovely scholar never forget her lesson?" "Oh no!" she fervently said, "never while she remembers her beloved instructress." "But may not flattery, disguised beneath a specious

appearance, gain credit from inexperience?" pursued Dauverne. "May not its artful blandishments, in the dress of truth, subvert the precepts of a friend, and seize the treasured heart? Believe me, Miss Forrester, appearances are not to be relied on; wealth, honour, admiration, are no panaceas against sorrow; for in my intercourse with the great world, I have learnt, fatally learnt, misery is as often concealed beneath a splendid habit, as ever rankles in the heart oppressed with penury." "Alas!" murmured Antonia, as the tears she in vain endeavoured to suppress stole down her cheeks, "what have I done, to make this caution necessary? How have I acted, to forfeit your esteem, to impress you with such ideas?" "You weep," exclaimed Dauverne, awakened by her emotions to a recollection of his unguarded warmth. "What have

I uttered—what have I dared to breathe, thus to call forth your tears? Pardon me," he continued, taking her hand, "and know, that my heart smarts with additional anguish for every pang I have occasioned." Antonia faintly smiled, and as her eyes sought the ground, her faltering lips articulated—"I am not offended, but with gratitude, receive this caution, as a proof of friendship." Dauverne raised the hand he still held, as a pledge of peace, to his lips; and successfully exerting himself, soon regained his native animation. The last lingering ray of glory tinged the western hemisphere as they entered the garden of the vicarage, and the blue vapours of evening mantled the cloud-capped hills: the air was cold and piercing, for

"Winter ling'ring, chill'd the lap of May."

And when they joined the family

circle, the cheerful flame of a new kindled fire, spread throughout the dining-room an aspect welcome and salutary. Imperceptibly the gloom of dejection vanished; the native smile of mirth returned; and the animating laugh, and innocent jest, flew round. The hour arrived, when followed by his guests, Dr. Moreland led to the social board; for he

——"Bid the welcome table spread,
And talked of virtue till the time of bed;
When the grave household round the hall repair,
Warn'd by a bell, and clos'd the day in prayer."

Each hour confirmed more strongly the prepossession of Antonia—in the absence of Dauverne the moments passed languidly away, but when his soothing voice, 'sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountain,' reached her ear, how rapid, how transient, were their flight. Yet they passed not un-

improved, new ideas, new hopes, marked their progress—hopes, whose source she was unable to trace, but which, springing up in her innocent mind, implanted new sensations, and tinctured it with a habit of reflection, unusual to the tenderness of youth: but the soft humility, the characteristic fervour of her ideas, still remained unimpaired. Mutual was the infatuation. Dauverne, left to his own ruminations, yet unwilling to search his heart, or to allow that any tenderer interest than friendship lurked there towards Antonia, suffered his partiality to gain ground, until a poison became settled, which it was impossible to eradicate. Sometimes, when the mask had fallen and love no longer slumbered, by its dangerous sophistry he pictured the barrier, which prevented his throwing himself at her feet, removed! Sometimes his 'minds eye' beheld Antonia

his wife—his soft, his gentle captivating companion! Sometimes, he saw himself possessing a claim to her confidence—her attention—her love: and so delightful were these ideas, that every other sentiment, like snow before the refulgent luminary of day, vanished, and left him for the instant alive only to pleasure! Alas! these chimerical scenes of happiness served but to fix the barbed arrow deeper into his heart: yet were its effects so sweetly soothing, that though he felt conscious of their baneful influence, his every attempt, which reason daily influenced, to dissolve the thraldom proved ineffectual. The resolution, so often formed, of quitting the vicarage, always vanished at her approach; and yielding to the incitement of inclination, he encouraged the hope, that familiarizing himself to her presence, listening each hour to her conversation,

and gazing on the winning sweetness of her manners, would conquer his attachment. The rectitude of his heart spurned at his new-formed sentiments, and whispered him guilty, in suffering sensations to gain ground, so opposite to his former ideas of virtue or propriety—sensations, which inspired love for one woman, when by the laws of honour his vows were affianced to another. Yet did he find palliatives to his affliction, in the assurance, that the adored object of his regard continued a stranger to the dangerous guest that had stolen into his bosom. His hopes were founded on her slender knowledge of mankind, on her little skill in the human heart, and her thorough ignorance of her own perfections. Every eye that rested on him seemed to dive into his secret; and the raillery of his friend, Dr. Moreland, was received with an in-

ternal dread, lest his penetration should pierce the flimsy veil of assumed restraint, and the knowledge terminate in the forfeiture of his esteem.

CHAP. VI.

As we have before observed, sympathy, from the first moment of their introduction, attracted Dauverne and Antonia to each other, and every succeeding interview confirmed their similarity of sentiments. They spoke of sensibility, of virtue, of magnanimity, of gratitude, of friendship, of the evils and vicissitudes of this life, of futurities, soothing promises—and the more exalted the enthusiasm of their ideas, the more cemented became the secret attachment of their heart. Together they explored the romantic recesses of the country; together they expatiated on the inexhaustible wonders of nature. The prospects upon which Antonia's eyes would dwell with rapture, were the favourite haunts of Dauverne's youth; and every woody glen,

every clay-built cottage, marked in the annals of his infancy, became dear and interesting to his artless companion. Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, occupied with the concerns of their family, perceived not the growth of an attachment, which threatened to destroy the peace of their esteemed inmates: and the mornings appropriated to study, when withdrawn for the improvement of their beloved offspring, were passed by Dauverne and Antonia, sometimes in rambling o'er the verdant banks of the Avon, sometimes in reading, sometimes in conversing, but oftener in the soul-harmonizing science of music, in which Dauverne was a perfect *cognoscenti*. The wild pathetic airs Antonia had learnt at the convent, swept with taste, and warbled with feeling, possessed the charm of magic, and called forth plaudits of admiration. The sounds were so soothing to her heart, so tranquillizing to her spirits,

that she would not have exchanged those moments of melancholy calmness for more tumultuous pleasure. Suddenly she changed the measure—she forgot she was observed: in idea she became transported to St. Eustacia's cloister—a hymn soft and solemn lingered on the air—a hymn she had often played to sister Benedicta, and which sounded, as it rose in full strains, like a requiem to the departed dead: her voice faltered, her heart seemed ready to burst with the emotions to which it had given rise; tears stole down her cheek—she stopped—her arm fell powerless by her side. Dauverne, who had watched her varying colour, and listened to the seraphic tones with tremulous eager rapture, darted forward; he snatched her hand, he fervently pressed it to his lips—almost with the effort recollection returned, a scarlet glow tinged his countenance, and hastily relinquishing it, he rushed

from the apartment. Amazement, delight, and fear, alternately possessed the bosom of Antonia; and almost unconscious of what she was doing, her eyes rested on the door through which she had lost sight of him. The dread of illness subdued every other idea, and took from her the power to breathe, when the object of her anxious solicitude re-entered. He attempted somethink like an apology for his inconsistency, but his voice was so faltering, and his countenance so depressed, that the fears of Antonia became realized. "You are ill," she said, in a voice which the supposition had rendered soft and interesting: "surely, Dr. and Mrs. Moreland should be made acquainted with——" "Not for the world," exclaimed Dauverne, interrupting her; "I am not ill—" he paused, then in low agitated accents, added, "but unhappy." Antonia started. "Unhappy!" she repeated,

"Father of heaven! who can hope for peace, if virtue like your's cannot ensure it?"

Gratified by her encomiums, thrown off his guard by her artless manner, his features instantly brightened; expressions of delight rose to his lips; suddenly he remembered Geraldine—a cold icy bar fell upon his heart, and a heavy struggling sigh was his only response. "Are you unhappy?" importuned Antonia, trembling at his silence. "I am," he solemnly replied, "but may you, my gentle friend, remain a stranger to its influence, as you are to its knowledge—may you never penetrate the thin veil which conceals my sorrows!" Alas! there was no fear: his secret was secure, for Antonia, unacquainted with the world, and a novice in the human heart, traced not its passions, and its feelings. "You call me friend," she replied, raising her eyes timidly to his; "dig-

nified by such an appellation," and a transient blush suffused her countenance, "should confidence be withheld?" "You know not what you ask, Miss Forrester," said Dauverne; "was I to open my heart to your inspection, I might gain your pardon—your pity, but forfeit your esteem. Dangerous would be the struggle; instead of procuring peace, instead of alleviating misery, it would banish the first, and ensure the latter."

Though perfectly unconscious of his allusion, it was enough for Antonia to know this first of men, this standard of perfection was unhappy: his total rejection of her services in mitigating his grief was forgotten, and her pity so highly excited, attempted in vain to express itself in words: broken and incoherent sentences, murmured in a voice low and tremulous, was all she could articulate, and a vagrant tear fell on her ivory bosom. "Cruel state of

bondage and unjust detention!" exclaimed Dauverne, tracing the fugitive. "Can the laws of honour and humanity confirm it?—Can freedom in a civilized land be pampered with, and the rights of election withheld?—Shall I forswear the power?" and he snatched her passive hand, and again fervently kissed it. Antonia started. "Sweetest of friends! loveliest of women!—" At that instant the door opened—little Percival, liberated from his studies, entered. Dauverne recovered his self-command, blessed the intrusion, and turned hastily to the window. "My secret is safe," he mentally ejaculated, "thank Heaven, she yet remains a stranger to the love I cherish! Another moment, and all would have been lost; another moment, and but for the appearance of my guardian angel in the form of Percival, to the innocent, the unconscious object, I should have declared my hopeless passion." "Dear!

what is the matter, Miss Forrester?" questioned the child. "Could you not play your music? I never cry, unless I can't learn my lesson, or unless papa or mama are angry with me; but you have neither to displease—why then do you look so sorrowful?" "If you were so unfortunate as to lose your good parents, my dear boy, would you not look sorrowful?" "Yes, yes," replied Percival, wiping away a tear that started at the suggestion, "but you was cheerful yesterday." "True," she replied, "and I trust I shall be so to day." "And Mr. Dauverne too," he continued, looking eagerly in his face, "who used to be so merry, now looks as grave, as—as—a judge."

Dauverne laughed at the child's remark, and the timely entrance of Dr. Moreland, with a letter in his hand, put a stop to further interrogatories. "For me?" he inquired as

the doctor held it forth. "Yes," he replied, "and the superscription is in the hand-writing of Sir Frederic." "Some fresh scrape, I warrant," observed Dauverne, breaking the seal; and bowing an apology to Antonia, he hastily perused it. "'Tis even as I thought," he continued, laughing, "poor Stanley! Listen, my dear Sir, and hear this fresh dilemma."

"*Dear Dauverne,*

"*A l'ordinaire,* got into a confounded scrape. Passed the night in the watch-house—bound over this morning to keep the peace. Curse all quakers! and for women, if ever again I put trust in the artful sex, may I be shot! Tell my good uncle, nature with me ever outstrips education; and some one of these odd days, a leaden bullet will silence the former, ere the latter can come to its assistance.—If I knew a conveyance more expeditious

than the mail, I would intreat you to take wing; but as it is, must count the hours until I see you, in the hope, that a little cool philosophy, and sound reasoning, will be suitable to the palate of the crest-fallen

FREDERIC STANLEY."

"Strange, inconsiderate, impetuous being!" gravely observed Dr. Moreland: "ever plunging into difficulties, and resigning the reins of self-command: and yet in spite of all his errors, his heart is so good, and his understanding so strong, that we pity where we ought to blame. What is to be done? How do you mean to act?" "Certainly to attend the summons," he replied, stealing a side-long glance at Antonia. She raised not her eyes, but the damask of her cheek faded to the pale tint of the woodrose. "And we must forego the pleasure of your society, my young friend," resumed

the doctor. "I fear, Miss Forrester and my little folks will miss their escort in their exploring rambles." "Your fears are gratifying, my dear Sir," said Dauverne: "how sweetly soothing to the heart to know ourselves remembered by our absent friends! But I have a strong *presentiment*, that a few days will see me returning to Warwickshire, perhaps accompanied by my versatile friend, to consult you as his physician, and to try the efficacy of domestic quiet, rational enjoyment, and sober steadiness. I assure you, it is the prescription I shall recommend." "Ah! do bring that sad truant with you," said the doctor; "and let us see whether our wilds cannot tame him." "I fear not," observed Dauverne; Stanley is a little like the will-o'-the-wisp, always upon the move —never stationary; and when we think we have him secure, a thousand to one but he slips through our grasp,

vanishes from Warwickshire, and appears in London, nay, for what I know, at the land's end." "'Tis a just simile," replied the doctor, laughing; 'push on, keep moving,' is his motto; but if I find him incorrigible, I will resign him into the hands of Miss Forrester. If 'music has charms to soften rocks and bend the knotted oak,' what may we not expect, from the union with gentleness and beauty?" "But," said Dauverne, looking anxiously towards her, "will Miss Forrester accept the charge? If she declines it, will it not be more friendly in me to warn Sir Frederic of the danger, and direct him for security to avoid temptation?"

Antonia remained silent; she feared to trust herself to speak; and but for the opportune entrance of Mrs. Moreland, her secret might have been discovered. "Bless me!" she exclaimed, "what an assemblage of grave

faces! Why sure you have forgotten our promised walk." "Dauverne must change it for a ride, Margaret," said her husband, pointing to the letter. "Sir Frederic has got into some fresh difficulty, and requests his presence in London." "*The crest-fallen Frederic Stanley,*" read Mrs. Moreland with assumed gravity; "a quaker too; I warrant 'tis some ludicrous anecdote that will recompense your risibility for the trouble of the journey." "Heaven knows!" said Dauverne, thoughtfully; "it is some new pursuit, but what it leads to we are yet to discover." "Nay, that is already known," replied Mrs. Moreland, "the letter proclaims that it led to the watch-house." "True," he rejoined, forcing a smile; "and may the watch-house lead to reformation!" "I doubt it much," observed Mrs. Moreland; "but what is your plan? must I say farewel?" "Nay, think not

so soon to get rid of me," resumed Dauverne, taking her proffered hand: "I purpose attending you and Miss Forrester in your walk this morning, unless you retract the indulgence, and in that case be it my task to obey." "I am thankful for the reprieve of a few hours," she answered, with forced gaiety; "no other apology from me can be necessary, for, you know, it is ever my maxim to 'welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.' And I hope in a few days, when poor Sir Frederic has unburdened his conscience, to have the opportunity of convincing you of the former, as I now have done of the latter."

Dauverne bowed his thanks, while Antonia, under pretence of preparing for the walk, stole out of the room. No sooner had she gained her apartment than a shower of tears relieved her labouring bosom; for many moments she wept, and while her hand

pressed her throbbing temple, her trembling lips articulated, "He is going—this night we part—to-morrow I shall no more behold him. Oh, Dauverne, better had we never met!" Surprised at her own exclamations, terrified at her own feelings, a burning blush died her countenance: she retraced her parting with the lady abbess, with the sisters of St. Eustacia: she had indeed then wept, but ah, how different were the tears to those she now shed! Then the presence of Dr. Moreland did not restrain them; now she sought to hide them even from herself. Unable to trace her sensations she attributed all to a dejection of spirits arising from a pain in her head —poor artless Antonia! had she said in her heart, how much nearer would she have been to the point! Bathing her eyes in rose-water, and tying on a veil, she hastily descended to the par-

lour, and joined the assembled party, who already awaited her.

They passed through the garden, and by an easy path ascended to the summit of the nearest hill, to enjoy the far-spreading prospect, and to inhale the freshening breezes, which the warmth of a mild spring day rendered particularly grateful. Immediately before them, peeping from amidst embowering groves, were seen the white-washed dwellings of contented labour: the curling smoke spired undisturbed, and lost itself in the blue firmament. On either side a kind of valley spread its verdant pasturage, on which the glorious sun-beams danced, and reflecting on the waving woods, gave a lighter tint to their foliage. The bleating of sheep, the lowing of herds, and the shrill whistling of the bargemen passing down the stream, was all that met the ear. And if the eye was

pleased with the mild beauties of the prospect, the mind was no less impressed by its tranquillity. "Who, unless compelled by necessity," exclaimed Dauverne, "would exchange this retirement for the smoke and bustle of London? Is it possible, that there exists beings whose judgment can be so perverted?" "Many, in defence of the metropolis, would make use of the same argument," observed Mrs. Moreland; "Lady Geraldine for instance." "'Tis fashion, fashion all, my dear Madam," resumed Dauverne; "Geraldine would prefer Warwickshire to the whole world if its umpire pointed to the country. Notoriety is the order of the day, and the sylphid *belle* who defies winter's chilling atmosphere, and scarce screens her tapered form from the rude blast of Boreas, would be the very first, was the system to change, to shrink from an August sun under thick folds of

flannel. We eat, we drink, we move, we sleep, but at the instigation of this fickle deity; and many, many thousands daily do violence to their feelings because *it is the fashion.* Here I may venture to give a single proof that the ladies' present mode of dress is a *national* inconvenience. A few weeks ago, attending my fair cousins in a walk, we were addressed by a poor debilitated mendicant. Selina, in the momentary impulse of her heart, felt for her purse—withdrew her hand—blushed, and hesitated. Geraldine, unabashed, laughed at her sister's confusion, whilst I *alone* relieved the suppliant. We passed on, and in a few minutes I learnt the state of the case—*pockets* are blotted out of the vocabulary of *fashion,* and consequently the indigent must plead in vain, because *purses* are *forgotten.* So you find, Miss Forrester, you are doomed to associate with a set of

beings among whom fashion *spreads* like an epidemical fever, and *rages* like a tertian ague." "I trust," said Antonia, faintly smiling, "thus forewarned I shall be enabled to escape the infection." "If you fulfil not my prognostic," he replied, "in resisting every temptation that leads to folly I shall never again rely on my discernment in the perusal of the human countenance." "Is curiosity included in the catalogue?" asked Mrs. Moreland; "because that, you know, is a passion which not a mother's daughter of us can resist." "So we are told of old," said Dauverne; "but even the most inveterate railers against the softer sex must confess that it is an incentive to the acquirement of knowledge." "Look at my little puppets," said Mrs. Moreland, directing their attention to the children as they chased each other down the green slope. "Heaven knows I am not a *fashiona-*

ble mother; for I would rather listen to their innocent voices and behold their happy sports than hear a *Catalani* or see a *Siddons.*" "I believe you," replied Dauverne, smiling. "Of all things under heaven a *fashionable mother* is the most unnatural. Hardened must be the sensations, the feelings of that bosom which can resign its tender offspring, almost unseen, to the care of hirelings—which can resist the voice of infant pleadings, because *pleasure* beckons and *fashion* authorizes the call."

Antonia gazed stedfastly on him; to doubt his word was impossible, yet to believe his assertion was almost as great a violence to her feelings. "What a world is this," she thought, "a mother renounce her own child! all-seeing heaven! why is not a mark stamped upon these apostates to nature, that every eye may read the *sin* and shun the *sinner?*" "What a cruel

task is mine," exclaimed Dauverne, looking at his watch, "to be compelled to shorten these moments of happiness; but my dear Madam," addressing Mrs. Moreland, "time stays not for us, and this morning he has winged on his swiftest pinions: remember I must repair to Stratford to meet the mail, or poor Stanley will in vain count the night's long hours." "Dear, how swift has this morning flown!" said Antonia, as every idea but of Dauverne's departure vanished. "I declare it seems but a few minutes ago since we quitted the vicarage." "Time, my dear girl," observed Mrs. Moreland, "is a deceitful prospect; but do you walk on, while I go call the children." "And has this morning indeed appeared so short?" inquired Dauverne, looking delightedly in her face. "Ah, Miss Forrester, how differently will it pass to-morrow!" Antonia spoke not, she endeavoured to smother a sigh,

while the sadness of her countenance betrayed her acquiescence to his suggestion. "To-morrow," he continued, "when I shall be far, far from this charming spot, when but in idea I shall have ceased to behold—" he paused, and then taking her hand, and gazing on her with the most touching softness—"the beloved inhabitants of the vicarage. But say, shall I live in the memory of my gentle friend? Will Miss Forrester suffer me to imbibe a soothing pleasure, the only one I am doomed to enjoy—the certainty of being remembered?" Antonia ingenuously promised what her heart whispered she would truly perform—never to forget him. "Transporting assurance!" he fervently articulated, pressing her hand, "with it may my untoward heart be satisfied." "And must you really leave us?" asked Percival, taking his hand, and looking imploringly in his face. "Must you really go to

London? Oh dear! how dull we shall all feel!" "We shall, indeed," said Stanley. "Not half so dull," observed Ellen, "as when the marquis takes Miss Forrester from us, for then we shall lose the music." Dauverne laughed at her undisguised reasons, while the affectionate mother remarked, that Miss Forrester and Mr. Dauverne were equally indebted for the compliment.

A long pause ensued; Antonia's eyes were bent on the ground with an appearance of deep and searching eagerness, as though she would have dived into the earth's green bosom and sought her buried treasures: successfully did it veil the listless inattention, with which she scanned over rich clumps of pansied violets and spiral blowing thyme that bedecked the mossy carpet. Mrs. Moreland perceived not her abstraction, and the children, musing on their friend's de-

parture, pursued their path in silence. Dauverne, equally dejected, equally lost in thought, mechanically moved down the hill, until a neat cottage, before obscured by trees, broke upon the sight: he started forward, a transient glow o'erspread his cheeks, "Oh!" he exclaimed, as his eyes rested on its humble walls, "that with a partner, whose bosom, like my own, loathing the active scenes of life, and with ecstasy appreciating the delights of domestic happiness, I was there tenanted, a humble, unenvied, unrepining mortal!" "Your wish borders on romance," said Mrs. Moreland, smiling. "*Is* content romance then?" questioned Dauverne—"*is* bliss ideal?" "Not altogether so," she replied, "when properly discriminated; but when too highly drawn its effects are dangerous.—It is like a bed of flowers treacherously expanding over a chasm, smilingly courting approach, but closing

in destruction. Think a moment—would your Geraldine approve this plan of solitude?" "*My* Geraldine!" murmured Dauverne, with a heavy sigh, "*my* Geraldine!" Antonia heard the exclamation, her eyes met his, and again in timid haste they sought the ground. "Would she," resumed Mrs. Moreland, regardless of his emotion, when

——————"Music *awakes*
The native voice of undissembled joy,
And thick around the woodland hymns *arise*."

"Hail the coming day, and cheer your solitude with artless mirth?" "When yellow corn springs from the barren rock," earnestly exclaimed Dauverne; "when limpid streams shall cool Arabian deserts, then, and not till then, will the Lady Geraldine smile on domestic life!" "Why you are grown an absolute railer," she rejoined; "do for pity's sake cast off

that reforming face ere you enter London, or really," archly glancing at Antonia, "all will be attributed to the stupid unfashionable atmosphere of the vicarage." "Say rather to the refinement of taste, and the force of example," interrupted Dauverne. "Nay, say to what you please," she replied, "for something will be necessary to account for the novelty of a gay young man turning censor."

Dr. Moreland met them on the lawn; an early dinner was provided, but appetite, the constant attendant of exercise and health, this inauspicious day seasoned not the banquet. Vain were the recommendations of the host—vain were the entreaties of the hostess: Dauverne thought of the journey, and the pain in Antonia's head precluded exertion. Again the exploits of Sir Frederic became the topic of conversation; and ere the servant and horses of Dauverne were announced she hated

the unfortunate Stanley for calling him from Warwickshire. Thrice he arose to say farewel, and thrice he resumed his seat; for, "parting is such sweet sorrow," that his heart struggled at the effort, as though it had there sought a resting place. At length he approached, and heedless of observation, grasped her hand with such fervour, as recalled the truant blush to her lovely cheek: he spoke not, but the pensive sadness of his eyes conveyed an expression, which seemed to say, "With you will my soul linger." He rushed from the apartment, vaulted into the saddle, and waving his hand vanished in a moment.

Still did Antonia remain at the window; still did her eyes seek to penetrate the envious grove which closed on the form of Dauverne. The prospect became cloudy; the Avon's stream possessed not its usual beauty: the woods, the flowers, nay, nature's

self seemed void, for the magic spell of affection was removed, and love no longer influenced. In vain did the children prattle; in vain did they strive to awaken her attention; their playfulness called her not from herself, and not till Werter, the beautiful little favourite spaniel of Dauverne, sprung upon her lap, did she feel conscious of her own abstraction. Gratefully she returned the caresses of the little animal; and as she patted his sleek head, internally promised to fulfil to him the place of his absent master. "Supposing," proposed Mrs. Moreland, "we walk to the village; it will pass an hour pleasingly, for Dauverne, methinks, has ran away with all our spirits." "Oh dear! no mama," exclaimed Ellen; "I am sure he looked very dull when he took leave of Miss Forrester." Antonia blushed, Dr. Moreland caught her eye, and for the first time looked earnestly in her face—a pro-

bability of the real state of the case darted across his brain, yet instantly did it vanish in his confidence on Dauverne's honour. He remembered not that love was an involuntary passion—he remembered not that the tie which bound Dauverne was compulsory—he remembered alone that that tie existed, that Antonia ere she had seen him knew of his engagement, and confidently relied on the hope of that knowledge having steeled her heart against his perfections. Every doubt instantly took wing, and the very next moment, when he saw Antonia caressing his little Rosa, he condemned himself for harbouring a single suspicion. The walk was tedious and uninteresting, for not even the gratitude of the cottagers, could fill the fearful void which every where pervaded: yet did Antonia confine her regrets to her own bosom, and she avoided mentioning Dauverne, though every breath

which blew seemed to whisper his name. It was one of those accustomary visits, which Mrs. Moreland frequently paid to the poor parishioners, and from which, till now, our herbits had ever experienced pleasure. As the vicar's wife, she made it a constant practice to see herself, whether the industrious had every thing requisite for comfort—to watch their labours, and by reward to encourage perseverance. Through her, infancy was taught to revere the power who gave it being; and never did she appear in the hamlet, but the eyes of age glittered at her approach, and youth's soft cheek dimpled into smiles. The nod of recognition, the smile of approbation, was courted by each individual; and every clay-built hovel, strewed with fresh sand and adorned with new gathered flowers, seemed in her to hail a benefactress. On their return they called at the lodge; old William was gone to

Bidford, and Mary, who had evidently been weeping, sought to conceal her swollen eyes by leaning intently over her work. "What is the matter, Mary?" questioned Mrs. Moreland, in the soothing accents of regard. "Are you ill? or has any recent occurrence disconcerted your spirits?" Mary could not answer; she rose from her chair; her interesting countenance flushed scarlet, and again the tears chased each other down her cheeks. "It is wrong to encourage dejection," resumed Mrs. Moreland; "lay aside your work; walk in the air, and you will be better. What will your good father think, should he return home and find you weeping?" "Oh, madam!" murmured the distressed girl, as the paleness of death succeeded. Antonia caught her arm. "You are faint, Mary," she exclaimed, "lean upon me." "My head aches," she articulated; "I believe it is the heat

of the weather," and a transient blush again tinged her pale features. Mary tottered to the door of the cottage, the freshening breeze seemed to revive her, for she presently returned, and with a melancholy smile declared she was better. "The weather is indeed oppressive," observed Mrs. Moreland; "but remember, Mary, when next your father leaves home for the day, do you walk over to the vicarage; we may all tire of our own company you know." Mary curtseyed. "Yonder comes my father," she exclaimed; "pray madam, pray Miss Forrester," (ardently) "don't tell him I was ill; it will only make him unhappy, and indeed there is no occasion." "Mary is strangely altered," said Mrs. Moreland, as they proceeded across the park; "she was once the very image of cheerfulness, full of health and spirits, joining with her rustic companions in every innocent amusement,

and passing the live-long hours in harmless mirth. But now her eyes certainly possess less fire, and her cheeks are less ruddy." "Even since I have known her, she is altered," observed Antonia. "I am afraid some village swain has stolen her heart," resumed Mrs. Moreland; "poor girl! they say love brings perplexity and sorrow.—In that case," smiling, "my good man must be the physician. I think Mary will make an industrious wife." "I trust she may be happy," said Antonia; "I feel interested in her fate." "If her choice is prudent there can be no doubt of it," replied Mrs. Moreland. "Dauverne will ever continue her friend, and she is perfectly docile and artless——" "Two necessary ingredients for matrimony," concluded the doctor, meeting them at the garden-gate.

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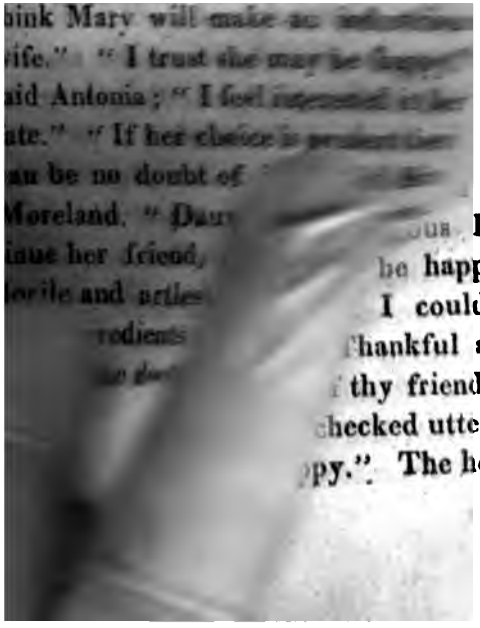

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harp, but the harmony was incomplete: something seemed to be wanting—she looked timidly around, and a half-smothered sigh swelled her bosom. The clock struck eleven when she retired to her apartment; a waning moon dissipated the surrounding darkness, and o'er all

"—— her sliver mantle threw,
And in her pale dominion check'd the night."

The wind, cold and shrill, whistled among the green leaves of the mournfully waving phillyrea, that clung to the frame of the window; and the oziers which lined the edge of the river, sighing in the blast, whispered nothing but sorrow to her responsive heart. Instead of retiring to rest, she stood musing o'er the occurrence of the morning—still did she feel the pressure of Dauverne's lip upon her hand, still did she hear his sigh, his eager exclamation. "He called me

friend," she murmured, "envied title! sooner would I be the friend of such worth, than empress of the universe!" The energy, the excessive praise with which she reflected on his conduct, confirmed the impression at first dictated by admiration for his noble sentiments; she loved him with all the fervour of her enthusiastic soul—loved him with a passion which had treacherously 'glided into her heart, and now tinctured her every action. "And yet he is not happy," she continued; "strange inexplicable destiny? why is not such worth, such gondness happy?" Tears occasioned by the suggestion stole down her cheek. "Amiable, generous Dauverne! who deserves to be happy if thou art not? Oh, that I could restore thee to peace!—Thankful am I for the precious gift of thy friendship, but—but," and sobs checked utterance —"thou art not happy." The hollow

sound of the church bell, tolling the midnight hour, summoned her from the window; she quickly extinguished her light, and sought in unquiet slumber a respite from agitation.

CHAP. VII.

"CONFOUND this little splenetic devil!" said Sir Frederic Stanley, pacing the breakfast-room. "To be foiled by a girl—to be taught prudence by a mere baby, and morality by a quaker! Sent to the watch-house to cool my courage, too! Aye, aye, friend Penrose, I hav'n't done with thee yet. By heavens, 'twas a dose which no hand but Dauverne's can qualify. Sweet, tantalizing, perplexing, agitating Mahala! Why, how now, Sirrah, who have we here?" starting at the opening of the door.—"Mr. Sunderland and Mr. Bravenger," replied the servant, and retired. "What, my friend, my old school-fellow, Harry Bravenger!" exclaimed Sir Frederic Stanley, shaking him heartily by the hand: "how

came you in town? Did you drop from the clouds, boy?"—"Faith, no, Stanley: four post-horses were my conductors."—"But what powerful motive could so unexpectedly transport you to England?"—"The apparition of a golden shower," interrupted Sunderland, laughing. "Old Ravenscroft, his rich uncle, bid fair for a sailing voyage to t'other country; but as the devil would have it, when the *doleful* nephew dutifully hastened from Waterford, instead of reaping a plentiful reprisal, the old boy had given them all the slip, and, in spite of *three* physicians, promises to rub through the attack." "Life is chequered with disappointment," observed Bravenger gravely: "my maxim is ever to bear them with Christian fortitude and unshaken philosophy." "To be hoodwinked out of ten thousand a-year requires a damned deal of philosophy, truly," rejoined Sunderland; "but,

thank my stars, there are ways and means of supporting an honourable subsistence. Do as I do: melt your guineas before you get them; dabble with the knowing ones; and when all credit's up, as a forlorn hope, marry, and pay off old debts with new money. Nothing so easy---a little flattery, a few soft speeches, and half a score of sighs, will do the business, and carry the palm of victory."---"It is a desperate remedy though," said Bravenger; "for when I marry, I mean to turn wise, and lead a sober life, and——" "Be ridiculed and laughed at by all your associates," interrupted Sunderland. "Better to be laughed at by the vicious," observed Sir Frederic, "than to be despised by the virtuous." "Avaunt with cold, heavy, sententious morality!" resumed Sunderland: "follow my footsteps, Bravenger; give me the reins, and see if I lead you not to honour. Notoriety's

the aim: there's nothing like a name, take my word for it. I would sooner game *fashionably*, shoot *fashionably*, drink *fashionably*, intrigue *fashionably*, though I felt damned sick of the pastime, than be an honest, sober, steady, dog, whom nobody knew, nobody talked of, nobody stared at. And faith, now a-days nothing is so easy: 'tis glorious times, Harry! In days of yore, *virtue*, *renown*, *patriotism*, were the beatened tracks to fame; but now, *extravagance*, *dissipation*, and *impudence*, crowns the work: the men court ye---the women smile at ye---the whole world admire you. 'Who's that handsome fellow?' 'What, don't you know? Why, I'm surprised: 'tis the famous Tom Sunderland.' 'What, he who seduced Lady Harriet, ran away with the Countess of ——, kicked up an uproar at the opera, shot Major ——, rode his own horse at Newmarket, and—— and——' 'Aye, the same, the same.'

'Lord, what a handsome vicious fellow he is! Why, I don't wonder he's so popular."---"A pretty picture, truly," said Sir Frederic, laughing; "and pray, what may be the finale of Tom Sunderland's career?" "Faith, I never take the pains of raising the veil of futurity," he replied: "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." "Shall I do it for you?" "As you please." "Then, for a cool hundred, we see the Fleet behind the curtain." "Possibly; and when I am there housed, nothing but an act of grace can release me." "Or the *post-obit* summons of nature," observed Bravenger; "and that, you know, cancels the debts of the *great*." "Ha, ha, ha!" vociferated Sunderland---"and which places the debtor and creditor upon the same line. Well, well, put off the day of reckoning; and when it comes, by my veracity, I must bear it." "But pray, who may this Cir-

cean goddess be, at whose shrine you mean so submissively to bow?" inquired Sir Frederic. "Patience, patience," replied Sunderland; "and a flaming paragraph will convey the information of---' Eloped, yesterday morning, from ——— the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Marquis of ———. The happy partner of her flight is the honourable Mr. S———, well known in the sporting world. The route of the fugitives has been traced to the north; but from the precautions taken, the happy pair have distanced their pursuers, and bid fair to blazon forth in London with renovated splendour!!!"

Their conversation was now interrupted by a loud rap announcing a visitor, and in a second the door was thrown open, and Dauverne entered. "A thousand, thousand thanks, my dear fellow, for this early compliance with my request," exclaimed Sir Fre-

deric, as soon as the first congratulations were over. "I have got into a cursed hobble, which the counsel of my Mentor can alone enable me to digest." "A hobble!" repeated Sunderland—"*allons donc*: I like difficulties; do let us hear." "In the first place," resumed Sir Frederic, "I am in love." "Is that all, Stanley?" interrupted Danverne. "I really believe it to be the hundred-and-fiftieth confession: but proceed; as I am to be the physician, let me hear the symptoms, and then I will minister to the disease." "In crossing Lombard-street, a few mornings ago," pursued Sir Frederic, "I was shot through the heart, by a glance from a pair of black eyes, levelled at me from beneath a quaker's bonnet. The business upon which I was going was instantly forgotten; and I resolved to follow my lovely enslaver home. She smiled so sweetly, as she supported the steps of her aged companion, that

a thousand loves and graces seemed to nestle around her; and Venus herself might have passed me unnoticed, so anxious was I in the pursuit. Oh! thought I, if I could but transplant this daughter of simplicity from the unsocial soil of *spirit-moving precision*, how glorious would be the conquest!" They stopped at the private door of a banking-house in the same street."—"A banking-house in Lombard-street!" interrupted Sunderland, "pray, who officiated as porter?" "A being," replied Sir Frederic, "who to see once, is to see eternally. Tall, thin, and scraggy; with a countenance that would fain bury knave beneath the mask of puritanism; but nature, in spite of every effort, at times gives the go-bye, and peeps forth in her own array." "By heaven! a true portrait," exclaimed Sunderland, laughing. "'Tis Obediah, the steward, butler, valet; in short, the factotum of my quiz of a

guardian, the rich banker, old Penrose." "And my incognito?" questioned Sir Frederic. "His daughter," replied Sunderland, "the little Mahala, as pretty a gipsey as ever lisped *thee* and *thou*, but as difficult of access as the grand signior's seraglio." "The greater the difficulty," said Sir Frederic, "the more glorious the renown. Tell me, that the road is straight before me, that there requires only to ask and Mahala will be mine; tell me that, and instantly I become supine and inactive. But let me see thorns and briars spring up at every step; let me see difficulties and barriers succeed each other, and the spur will goad me through fifty fires and fifty devils." "Granted," said Dauverne, gravely; "but, allowing the possibility of surmounting these hydra-headed difficulties, what prospect lies beyond them?" "Discontent and self-reproach," observed Bra-

venger. "Come, come, Stanley, proceed with the story," exclaimed Sunderland; "and then, if you please, you may discuss the point till midnight; for I have promised to meet Carberry at Tattersal's at three o'clock." "Well, I marked the house," continued Sir Frederic, "returned to my lodgings, quickly gave directions to my faithful Gregory, and in the evening conversed with Obediah in person. It was long before the fellow would understand my meaning, or, rather, before he would unclose his lips: but gold, that never-failing key, rendered him loquacious, and, with the most gracious smile, looking at the guineas—'Yea, yea, this is sound argument truly: I am a loyal subject, and value that man's, called the king's, pictures. I like thy manners too, neighbour; and as far as is consistent with my duty, will promote thy cause, considering it the well-being of Jonathan Penrose's

daughter.' I instantly wrote a few lines, expressing my admiration, and imploring the indulgence of an answer, which Obediah promised faithfully to convey to the fair hands of the beautiful Mahala." "And which," said Sunderland, "I suppose, the overruling workings of the *spirit* induced him to give to her father. But proceed, for I know Obediah of old." "Faith, I know not to whom he gave it," rejoined Sir Frederic: "I only know, that not receiving an answer, I was fool enough to write again, intreating her to meet me in —— square. That day I dined with Lord Carberry. The invigorating glass flew round; and when I stole from the company to fulfil my engagement, the luscious juice of the grape had given me a zest for adventure. Judge then of my disappointment, when, instead of the lovely Mahala, I met one of the broad-brimmed fraternity. He accosted me with—'Young

man, what dost thou want with the maiden called Mahala Penrose?' Not being primed for cool reasoning, I answered with unbecoming severity; cursed the hypocrisy of Obediah, and consigned the whole sect to the devil. 'I tell thee what, my hot-heated spark,' said the quaker—'I am the father of the damsel; and if ever again thou disturbest my family, or if ever again thou seekest to corrupt my handmaid, Mahala Penrose, I will resign thee into the hands of those men, whose office it is to tame such as thou art.' This was a kind of doctrine by no means conclusive; at least, I was not in a frame of mind calmly to digest it: the consequence was, words ensued, a crowd collected, and my peppery worship was handed to the watch-house." Bravenger and Sunderland burst into a loud fit of laughter; while Dauverne gravely inquired, how he found himself in the morning? "Disconcerted

and perplexed," answered Sir Frederic, "angry with the whole world, and truly ashamed of myself. Yet it was no time to sit and muse on my distress: exertion was necessary. I sent for Carberry and Westbrook, who entered into cognizance for my future *good behaviour;* was then bound over to keep the peace; supported the laugh raised at my expence, and returned, a crest-fallen hero, to my lodgings." "And then followed my summons to London," said Dauverne. "True," he replied; "I was disconcerted, wanted advice, and I knew no one so capable of giving it." "Why then," pursued Dauverne, "return with me to-morrow morning into Warwickshire."— "What!" he reproachfully answered, "and leave the divine Mahala?"— "Unless," interrupted Sunderland, "you purpose smuggling the heiress; but remember, Stanley, you will not be the *first* baronet who has crossed

the seas for a similar theft. But joke aside—old Penrose is not a man to be trifled with, and Mahala *is his daughter*. His integrity won upon my father, and induced him to leave me under his guardianship; of course I have had various opportunities of studying his character, and have ever found him a staunch friend to virtue, but an implacable foe to dissipation, or rather what we call *life*. The other evening on pecuniary business, owing to a cursed run of ill luck at the hazard table, I called upon him; immediately entered on my errand respecting the disposal of an estate; calmly received a long lecture upon prodigality, intemperance, and so forth, and then, of course, expected he would sanction my desire, but the old fellow threw every obstacle he could possibly suggest in my way, and at length peremptorily denied my request, though he knew that in three months, on my arriving

at the age of twenty-five, by the will of my father, his authority would be annulled. Tired, sick to death of morality, and recollecting I had promised the Duchess of Delaware to call in at the opera, I arose to depart. 'Where art thou going to spend thy evening, Thomas?' inquired my guardian. 'To the opera; will you go? there's a seat in my chariot at your service.' 'I go to the opera!' replied the half angry quaker—'I go to that sink of folly and extravagance to hear what I don't understand, and understand what I don't hear—I pay a piece of gold to look at a pack of painted faces and empty heads!—No, no, Thomas Sunderland, when I am seen there the world will have grown steady, and thou wilt have grown wise. And as for thy chariot, pay thy debts, boy, and then see whose it will be.' 'Folly!' I repeated, with a smile of incredulity. 'In the name of all that's inexplicable

when will you think like other people?' 'When other people think like me,' replied the old citizen. 'To grudge a trumpery piece of gold to hear *Angelica Catalani*,' I resumed, in a voice of surprise. 'Why many of my friends pay some thousands for a *seven years* seat, and ten to one in the end if they've understood *seven words*.' 'And a dear purchase it has proved, truly,' rejoined Penrose, dryly, 'to pay for *seven years* and to retain it *four months* and *twelve days*. But no matter, the world is turned to a madhouse, for all its inhabitants are insane.' 'Tis the fashion, 'tis the fashion,' I said, rising to depart; 'the passport for a gentleman.—It *bars* the doors of a spunging house, and renders the persons of all honourable members *sacred*. Oh! if I could once get chosen I would laugh at all duns, defy all creditors, drive four in hand upon *tick*, game upon *tick*, live upon *tick*,

and when my seven years of safety had expired I would—I would—' ' Shoot myself,' concluded the quaker, ' and do the only good action in my life just at the close of it, by ridding the world of such a worthless, useless being as myself. Aye, Thomas Sunderland, will that do ?' This was a finishing stroke to my patience; I hastened from the house, repaired to the opera, and it was long before the smiles of the beautiful duchess could restore my temper to its native equilibrium. But come, Bravenger, let us be off: at three Carberry will expect us. Yet stay," returning from the door, and clapping Sir Frederic on the shoulder, " I had forgot; you have a rival; Mahala, notwithstanding *quakerism*, loves Powersly. Give up the pursuit, for, if I mistake not, it will prove a loss of time." " Who, Powersly of the navy ?" questioned Dauverne. " The same, the same."—And away he has-

tened, followed by Bravenger, and springing into a curricle whirled with rapidity down Bond-street. "Happy Powersly!" sighed Sir Frederic, striking his hand on the table. "By heaven! this last discovery has crushed all my visionary castles. Well, Mahala," after a pause, "if I cannot possess your heart, perish the thought of vain rivalry and cruel persecution! May you be happy in whatever walk of life destiny may place you! And now, Dauverne, to-morrow morning I am ready to set off for Warwickshire." "Nobly determined," said his friend, shaking him by the hand; "'tis finished like yourself, Stanley, for in spite of the world's custom and the ruling impulse of native gaiety you possess a heart which will ever chain me your friend." "Enough, enough, my dear fellow," replied Sir Frederic; "spare my blushes, and by way of changing the subject tell me when I may hail

you a Benedict?" Dauverne started; an icy chill crept over him, and a sickening spasm pierced his heart—Antonia, mild, gentle in all her native loveliness rose to his imagination, and the words, "cruel, detestable thraldom!" burst from his lips. "Heyday!" exclaimed Sir Frederic "what now? Lady Geraldine is young." "*She's rich,*" murmured Dauverne. "Lady Geraldine is handsome," resumed Sir Frederic. "*She's rich,*" once more repeated his friend. "Lady Geraldine is the talk, the gaze, the admiration of the whole world." "*She's rich,*" a third time articulated Dauverne. "Why, what the devil ails you?" said the astonished Sir Frederic. "Are *riches* the only requisite in a wife?" "So unfortunately thought my father, and—" "His son," observed Sir Frederic, archly, "thinks differently." "Even so," replied Dauverne, "for worth, not riches, he

gained his heart." "Say you so?—how?—where?—to whom?" "Nay, be not inquisitive," he answered; "though honour ought, but has not steeled my heart, yet has it placed a seal upon my lips. When and where I will pass over, but in respect to whom, I will frankly acknowledge—to youth, beauty, innocence, virtue; but I fear (for her sake) poverty and dependence." "*Dependence,*" repeated Sir Frederic; "pshaw! you a man of *fashion* and frightened off the field! why Carberry, Westbrook, Sunderland, Bravenger, and a thousand others would tell you there's nothing so easy. Marry Lady Geraldine, my dear fellow, and—and—and—" "And what?" impatiently questioned Dauverne. "And—and—why damn it man, don't you understand me? Do as others do, take a snug cottage and keep *dependence* in a corner." "If I thought you serious, Sir Frederic," said Dau-

verne, sternly, "the man who could thus advise should be my friend no longer. If you had a sister, and a libertine, because the *enlightened* world winks at the action coolly, deliberately, dishonourably seduced her heart, and drew her from the paths of innocence, how would you act?" "Shoot him," warmly interrupted Stanley, "and rid the world of a scoundrel unworthy to live." "Then," resumed Dauverne, "if an artless, unsuspecting, lovely girl, without a brother, without a father to espouse her cause, by chance is thrown in your way, is it manly, because the hand of affection cannot grasp a pistol, to take advantage of her weakness, and betray what nature, courage, honour teaches us to defend?" "Dauverne," said Sir Frederic, proudly, "from any other lips this question would be an insult—from your's it is a reproof. If upon earth there exists one character

more despicable than another it is the man who takes advantage of a woman because she is *unprotected*, and *dastardly* commits an action he had not *courage* to defend." "Give me your hand," exclaimed Dauverne; "Stanley, give me your hand, and henceforth let not your lips bely your heart." "And to-morrow," said Sir Frederic, with recovered gaiety, "we are off for Warwickshire. Well, 'tis as good a place as any to rub off a prepossession. But what will my good uncle say to the Quixotic spirit of his nephew?" "Perhaps to transfer it," said Dauverne, mournfully. "Faith! there's not much fear of that either," resumed the baronet; "for there is so much love already at the vicarage that there's no room for any addition." "At the vicarage," eagerly questioned Dauverne, Antonia alone in his imagination at the moment constituting its inhabitants, "what mean you?"

"Only that antediluvian pair, the doctor and his Margaret: why positively if they were to come to London they'd be laughed at—all *civilized* society would expel them as *non-descripts*—a man adore his wife after a *ten years* dose of matrimony, oh monstrous, monstrous! not a pretty mouth, in the whole circle of fashion, but would lisp out shame! And for my poor aunt she would be stamped as tasteless, insipid, vapid by every beau and belle in the community." "Nay, when we reflect on the education and pursuits of youth in the present day," observed Dauverne, "we cannot wonder at the scenes of matrimonial misery and inconstancy which hourly arise. The mind scarce formed is sent to be matured at a boarding school, that seminary of modern love, in which superficial taste usurps the place of permanent acquirement, and in that the form is graceful and the exterior fair, in com-

ter how contemptible the heart or worthless the interior." "Come, come, Dauverne," said Stanley, "you are severe on these institutions of *knowledge*." "Not a jot more than they merit," he rejoined; "remember I speak not in general terms—I speak merely of those styled *fashionable* boarding schools, where the *Lady Paramount once* in the day *condescends* to show herself to her pupils—where *money* closes the lips of reproof, and girls can *act* as they can *pay*." "Then in heaven's name," inquired Sir Frederic, "how can you think of marrying a woman who has thus received the *polishing* stroke of education? for if I mistake not Lady Geraldine passed some years at C——house." "She did, Stanley," replied his friend, with a heavy sigh; "but believe me honour, not inclination, is the incentive. In infancy the bond was formed, and when my father died, as his last

request, I gave my concurrence in a sacred promise—where, then, is the alternative?" "For feelings like your's there exists none," said his friend; "but women of fashion, my dear fellow, are all alike, all interested, ambitious, and unfeeling; they seek by every charm which beauty can invent to steal the heart, and when they have secured it laugh at the victim and throw him aside for the first *fool* who is superior in *rank* or *fortune*. Then may not the charms of Lady Geraldine—the eighty thousand *charms*——" "Hold, hold," interrupted Dauverne, "I wish not to build my happiness on another's misery." "Pretty well for vanity, truly," rejoined Sir Frederic, laughing; "so you really fancy Geraldine loves you." "You mistake me, Stanley," he replied; "I meant to infer that happiness can never be the lot of that woman who forms a union with a man where

her *fortune*, not *herself*, is the inducement." "And pray," again inquired the baronet, "may I ask what will be the *inducement* should *you* form a union with her?" "Honour," replied Dauverne; "had she millions, and that little word was not concerned I would reject them all. But should I marry her never shall she know how many struggles it has cost me—never shall she know how I love, how I adore another. The man who for *gold* can relinquish *affection* may, when the aim is obtained, forget *gratitude*, for his soul must be *sordid* and his ideas *base*. Believe me, Stanley, though I cannot admire, yet I could wish Geraldine a better fate." "Let her choose her own then," said Sir Frederic; "tell her frankly that the heart was ever a free gift—in short, dressed in what language you please, tell her that you love another, and the devil's in it if she does not set you free." "Before

I can do that, my good friend," replied Dauverne, forcing a smile, "you must instil into me some of your characteristic *candour*." "I wish from my soul I could take her off your hands," resumed Sir Frederic; "but there we have no chance, for you will be a *marquis* and I am only a simple *baronet*." "Come," said Dauverne, taking his hat, "will you walk? I must call in St. James's square before I quit London, or the marquis will wonder at my inattention."

We shall not attempt to enumerate the "Good morning's—How d'ye do's—Hah! how long have you been in town?" &c. &c. which greeted them from every quarter in their lounge through St. James's street and Pall-mall; but shall simply say, that they found the marquis alone; the marchioness and the ladies Geraldine and Selina being gone to pass an hour at the exhibition. "This is an un-

looked-for pleasure," said the marquis, shaking Dauverne by the hand; "I thought you had been in Warwickshire." "Yes, yesterday I was, my lord," he replied, "and to-morrow I purpose returning thither." "Then," said the marquis anxiously, "you have seen my ward, Miss Forrester." "I have." "Say," he resumed, "is she like—is she as amiable as Dr. Moreland informs me?" "If perfection is to be found in human nature," replied Dauverne, fervently, "it centres in Miss Forrester." "Indeed—I think the picture is highly coloured," said the marquis, with forced gaiety: "in four or five days I shall see the original, and then I will give my opinion to the painter. What say you, Sir Frederic?" "Say, my lord," he replied, "that if Miss Forrester is not an angel she at least possesses the powers of fascination, for Carberry, who had but a transient

glimpse, has talked of no one else ever since." "Take care of your heart then, my dear Sir," observed his lordship, "for by all accounts danger lurks around her." "Oh! there can be no fear there," exclaimed Dauverne, looking significantly at his friend, "'tis guarded by a deep impression. But what is this new arrangement?" addressing the marquis, "in four or five days your lordship purposes seeing Miss Forrester! I thought the original plan was for the family to have remained a fortnight longer in town." "In a family like mine," said the marquis, "subject to as many changes as the weather, it is perhaps a difficult task to say which was the original plan; but, however, the present is to quit London in a few days, to spend June and part of July at the Grange, and from thence to proceed to St. Antholine's, as I wish my fair ward to see some of the beauties of a country

she has so newly entered." "Miss Forrester is then to be of the party," said Dauverne. "Certainly," replied the marquis; "from our arrival in Warwickshire she will become a member of my family."

Dauverne sighed, but answered not, and having promised to call at the Grange, and inform the housekeeper of the new arrangement (Sir Frederic and himself declining the marquis's pressing invitation to stay dinner), arose to depart, when a thundering at the door announced the arrival of some visitors, and a moment after, the Marchioness of Allingthorn and her daughters entered. "Bless me!" exclaimed Lady Geraldine, smiling most graciously on her cousin, "this is unexpected; why I should as soon have guessed seeing the Pope of Rome. Just exported from Warwickshire—fresh from green fields and meandering streamlets—how fares the Grange, and all

our rustic neighbours? Why, what in the name of wonder have you done with yourself?" turning to the baronet, "we have had a very passible morning; all the world were at the exhibition excepting Sir Frederic Stanley." "And Mr. Dauverne," observed Lady Selina. "Oh! I never nominate him one of the world," resumed her sister; "he must change his pursuits before we admit him to be of that *select* set." "It is an admission he has no ambition to attain," said Dauverne, gravely. "'Pon my honour I believe it," laughingly replied her ladyship, "for there is no one who takes more pains to remain a negative." "I cannot imagine what you would distinguish by the term *negative*," remarked Lady Selina; "this I am sure, I would rather tread in the steps of Percival Dauverne, than become an envied candidate for notoriety." "Indeed," [illegible]

retorted Lady Geraldine, "perhaps you forget there are *negatives* of *both* sexes." "And *superlatives* also," said Sir Frederic bowing to Selina. A momentary tinge stole over her cheek, and her eyes darted rays, not of exultation but of pleasure. "Oh certainly!" rejoined Lady Geraldine, "we have all descriptions, beaux and belles, approvers and nomenclators, philosophers and metaphysicians; nay, even down to railers and sophistical egotists." "And humility?" questioned Sir Frederic. "Pshaw!" interrupted her ladyship, "you may as well ask me for prudence; humility's so trite a term that we have voted it obsolete—why even tradesmens' pretty daughters have abjured it. Once upon a time—that's the way you know to begin a story—there lived a maid called *Meekness*——" "Hush, hush!" interrupted the marchioness, throwing down a newspaper; for heaven's sake don't talk of meekness. I have just been

reading the brilliant account of our last night's ball; why the town absolutely rings with the condescension of the *prince*, the taste of the hostess, and the matchless elegance of her lovely daughters." "I know it all," said Lady Geraldine, smiling; "do you like the diction?" "Amazingly," replied the gratified marchioness. "It was written by a choice spirit I assure you," rejoined her ladyship—"by one who shared the revels, and partook of the hospitality of the—the—" laying her finger on her forehead as though she had forgotten—"the—" "Admired hostess," said the marchioness. "Well, but who," she continued, "was the writer? Upon my word he has a mighty pretty turn for composition, and if my patronage can be of any service to him, I am sure I won't withhold it." "Heaven and earth," thought Dauverne, "how by gratifying a woman's vanity may a knave creep into office!" Sir Frederic

smiled, Lady Geraldine exulted, and Lady Selina pitied the credulity of her mother. "Well, but do acquaint us with the name of this publisher of our actions?" importuned the marchioness. "I tell you," replied her daughter, "he was a partaker of our gaiety." "Oh! then I have him," exclaimed Lady Selina. "I know no one so calculated to fill the *honourable* office of *puffer*, as the honourable Mr. Sunderland." "Sunderland!" repeated the marchioness. "Yes," said Selina, archly; "what else is he fit for?" "Well, you allow him some merit, however," said Lady Geraldine, sarcastically smiling, "many would not excel even in that." "Slender indeed is the thread," rejoined her sister, "if by that suspends all his worth." "'Tis a friendly and disinterested act," observed the marchioness. "He is the best judge of *that*," again interrupted Lady Selina. "'Tis indisputably

spreading abroad the praise of his friends, and stamping their names with—" "Folly and extravagance," mentally ejaculated Dauverne, though the marchioness concluded with—— "Popularity and munificence." "I don't know how it is," remarked Lady Selina, "but there certainly is a something in Mr. Sunderland inimical to esteem and confidence—I always dispised a coxcomb." "I admire your sentiments, Lady Selina," said Sir Frederic. "And condemn mine," questioned Lady Geraldine. "Pardon me, I did not say so." "Well, you thought it, and that 's nearly the same thing; but by way of maintaining an opinion of my own, I do protest, I think Mr. Sunderland agreeable in every thing he undertakes." "I believe you," said her sister, significantly, "for we all know flattery is his *fort*." Lady Geraldine was about

to retort, when the marquis, who since the entrance of his family had sunk into abstraction, suddenly started from his reverie, and turned to Dauverne, exclaiming—"You really think she possesses every charm which the heart can sigh for in woman?" "Most certainly she does, my lord," he replied, who felt it could be no other than Antonia of whom the question was asked. "Who is this paragon?" inquired the marchioness. "My ward, Miss Forrester, Caroline," replied the marquis. "Oh! the little Italian," exclaimed Lady Geraldine, "just descended from Olympus, for Carberry calls her a goddess:—is she so very superlative?" "In excellence she is." "In *excellence*, then her beauty is not so transcendent." "Her form and countenance is as perfect as her mind," replied Dauverne. "Is she tall or short?"—"The standard most to be

coveted in woman?" "Is she fair?"—"As polished ivory." "Her eyes blue?"—"As the cerulean sky." "Her forehead?"—"Open and majestic." "Her nose?"—"True Grecian." "Her mouth?"—"As the opening rose-bud moist with the morning dew." "Her teeth?"—"Mocking in whiteness the snowy down of the swan." "Upon my word, Mr. Dauverne," continued Lady Geraldine, ironically, "you have mounted to the very tip-top of the Parnassian ladder. One powerful recommendation she certainly possesses." "What is that?" asked Lady Selina. "*Novelty*." "She does indeed," rejoined Dauverne, "for she has beauty without conceit, innocence without affectation, and truth without disguise." "Sweet girl!" said Lady Selina, "how I long to see her!" "And to erect the triumvirate of friendship," satirically observed her sister; "see what a matchless com-

tion will be the Countess of Carberry, Lady Selina, Dauverne, and Miss Forrester!" "A coalition," said the marquis, firmly, "which I trust will ever remain unimpaired. You look surprised, Caroline," addressing the marchioness: "remember Miss Forrester is a stranger; for though England is the place of her nativity, yet from having left it in infancy, to her it may be styled a foreign land. Besides, she knows no relative ties, she acknowledges no tender connexions; a father or a mother she has never seen—remember her an orphan, and that, surely, will be sufficient to awaken interest in the heart of sensibility." "It will indeed," said Lady Selina, chasing away a tear which the picture had called forth. "Then she becomes our guest on our arrival at the Grange," said the marchioness. "Not our guest, Caroline, but a member of our family," replied

the marquis. The marchioness smiled, "very well my love, as such we shall receive her." "From what part of Italy does she come?" questioned Lady Geraldine. "From a convent near Leghorn," answered Dauverne. "Oh! then I suppose she is quite a novice in the world," resumed her ladyship. "Pray, my lord," addressing her father, "were her parents Italians? (though the name of Forrester sounds much more like an English one)—did they visit England? or, was your intimacy commenced abroad?" The marquis rose from his chair, and walked precipitately to the window. "Were they people of any consequence?" she continued, regardless of his agitation. "They were," he replied in hurried accents; "her mother was virtuous, and her father a man of rank." "Has she any fortune?" rejoined the inquisitor, "or—" "You are importunate, Geraldine,"

said her father, forcing a smile: "pardon me, I think it not necessary to solve your inquiries." Ere yet she could reply, the door was thrown open, and the Duchess of Delaware's name announced. "Ah, my dear friend!" exclaimed Lady Geraldine, as her grace, light as evening zephyrs, tripped into the room, "how very kind to peep in upon us!—Shall we meet you at B—— house to night? My lord duke gives a grand concert, and the Billington supports it with her ablest exertions." "Oh! no doubt his grace is fond of music," said the duchess laughing; "perhaps, knowing its powers, he thinks, if it cannot restore youth, it may, at any rate, soften the insupportable listlessness of age." "I should rather imagine," observed Dauverne, "that dotage, the concomitant of age, has ensued; for if the world speaks truth, the siren has so entranced the senses of this *ana-*

teur, that he has *levelled* all distinctions, and actually placed her at the same table with his *daughter*." "Well, if he does not make her his duchess, 'tis no matter," said Lady Geraldine; "surely, the poor man may pass the few hours he has to live in his own way." "Dear! I wish Wickham would come," exclaimed the duchess. "I saw the divinest dog at the corner of Pall-mall you can possibly imagine: I have dispatched my factotum to accommodate matters: ah! here he is! Well, where is the sweet creature?" "The man won't part with the dog, my lady duchess," said Wickham, bowing most obsequiously. "Oh! but he must," resumed her grace; "I cannot exist without the charming fellow.—Tell the cross wretch, *the Duchess of Delaware will not* be denied." Again Wickham retired, and again he returned. "It is a mighty favorite, and please your grace, and the

owner protests he will not resign it under twenty guineas." "Oh the extortioner!" exclaimed the duchess. "Well, pay him, pay him; bring hither the dear creature, and I care not for the price."

In a few minutes a fine large Newfoundland dog was ushered into the drawing-room; but seeing only strangers, he ran under the table, and set up a dismal howl. The marchioness raised her hands to her ears; the gentlemen laughed; while the duchess, rising from her seat, hastened to console her new favourite. But Neptune, little appreciating the condescension of her grace, and unconscious of the distinguished favours that awaited him, commenced a terrific growl, and distanced his fair purchaser by his threatening aspect. "Oh, the brute! what, snap at so kind a mistress? Take him away, Wickham; and remember, I condemn him to the stable, until he

knows how to value my favours." "How is his grace?" inquired the marchioness. "Quite laid up," replied the duchess; "flannelled from head to foot, and unable to quit his bed. Do you know," turning carelessly to Lady Geraldine, "after I left you last night, I called in at Lady Broomfield's, was prevailed upon to join the faro table, and lost, Lord! Lord! I am afraid to tell you, how much." "Who was fortune's favourite?" asked Lady Geraldine. "Westbrook." "Oh! then you'll compromise." "I don't understand your ladyship," said her grace, as a dark frown o'erpread her lovely countenance. "Why, I only mean that you will soon win it back," rejoined Lady Geraldine; "for the viscount, I am sure, is too gallant to distress a lady." "I certainly shall take my revenge," said the duchess, resuming her native smile. "Were you at the

opera on Saturday, Mr. Dauverne?" she continued. "No, I was in Warwickshire." "Oh monstrous! what a sacrifice! in Warwickshire, when London is so agreeable. I assure you, you met with a most irreparable loss; for I never heard Catalani warble so divinely in my life." "Her powers are very great," observed Sir Frederic; "and she modulates her voice with amazing celerity." "*Very great*," repeated her grace, contemptuously; bless me, what an insipid term! She is wonderful, exquisite, superlative. Not the famed sirens, who enticed the listening mariners of old, could excel her—Orpheus drew Eurydice from the shades—Catalani would have retained her." "Not if she had possessed the same incentive," said Dauverne, laughing; "love is a powerful controller: besides, your grace must remember, that woman has given convincing proof *she* cannot resist looking

behind *her*." "Pshaw!" lisped the duchess; "you dive into the very pith and marrow of the subject. Well, think as you please, but, I do maintain, this bewitching Italian merits a pension. Some of our ministers only perplex and teaze, and rouze man's turbulent passions, while she harmonizes all our differences, smooths even the rough features of our legislators, and sooths, with oblivious antidote, the jarring of parties.—Indeed, indeed, she merits a pension," she continued, rising to depart, "and when Delaware is prime minister, she shall have one." "And the public finances?" questioned Dauverne. "Are often worse expended," resumed her grace, moving towards the door. "Good bye! good bye!" and resigning a hand to Dauverne, this *votary of fashion* sprung into her chariot, and proceeded to execute her morning avocations. "What a sweet girl is your

little cousin Selina!" said Sir Frederic, as they left St. James's square. "I do think—" "What?" questioned Dauverne, smiling. "That she possesses a thousand charms," answered the baronet. "I admire her spirit, for she seems, notwithstanding the decisive manner of Lady Geraldine, to retain her own opinion." "Yes, that she does," said his friend; "and frequently declares it in spite of the rules of fashion." She is very lovely," resumed Sir Frederic, after a pause; "there is less animation, but certainly more sweetness, than in the countenance of Mahala." "She will eclipse the fair quaker yet," said Dauverne, laughing. "Pshaw! can't I look at a pretty woman without being in love?" rejoined Stanley. "Oh! without a doubt—look first, and love after," continued Dauverne. "Upon my honour, I know no one more easily ensnared, and was it not as *lasting* as

it is *violent*, I should tremble for your liberty." "Would it not be folly to persevere, where I know my affection can never be returned?" asked Sir Frederic. "Mahala Penrose loves Powersly, and, therefore, I am at liberty to change." "Certainly, certainly," said Dauverne; "and may your election rest on Selina! She has every thing you can wish; rank, beauty, fortune—" "And a heart?" said Stanley, smiling. "Nay, in that she must answer for herself," replied Dauverne. "Well, to-morrow we are off for Warwickshire; and when the Allingthorn family comes to the Grange, you know, I shall have opportunities of studying her character." Sir Frederic paused, for they had now reached their lodgings in Bond-street; smiled at his own versatility, and followed his friend to the dining-room.

CHAP. VIII.

When the pale and nearly exhausted beauty, returning from the midnight revel, presses, with restless, and feverish slumbers, her downy pillow, Antonia would arise, and seeking in exercise the boon of health, with her young companions, and her sportive favourite, Werter, "brush the dew upon the upland lawn." The matin-song of forest warblers; the fragrant perfume of expanding flowers; and the soft æther of morning beauties, from which the sons and daughters of luxury are excluded, were to her objects of never failing admiration. And though her mind was oppressed with a secret listlessness, an unknown sorrow, her countenance wore

"That expression sweet of melancholy,
Which captivates the soul,—"

Yet as her eyes rested on nature's produce, imagination was lifted up to "nature's God." Often, without fear or caution, would she wander through scenes where the gentle dominion of innocence and peace appeared to preside! Often, through landscapes of Arcadian beauty, for whole hours roam without meeting a single being, save old William, who, struck with delight, at the sweet complacency of her features, the airy elegance of her figure, and the vivid glow of health which dappled her fair cheek, would pause, and in her approach, almost mistake her

"For a fairy vision
Of some gay creature of the element,
And as she passed would worship!"

Often would she examine the beauties of the fishing-house! Often muse on the tale of the doves; for every syllable spoke the heart of Dauverne, and

warranted her admiration! Yet would a pang, an aching sensative emotion mix with her ideas—an emotion which ever became more acute when she thought of Lady Geraldine; and which usually terminated in the wish that she had never quitted St. Eustacia—that calm retreat, endeared by pleasing remembrances, signalized by first dawning memory. Ah, could she but return thither! solitude, religion, and friendship might, she thought, sooth her into peace: shut out for ever from the pursuits of luxury, *the votaries of fashion*, she imagined she could feel content to wear away her life, without once repining at the waywardness of fate. Alas! she forgot that the same visionary sorrow would be her companion—that the same shadow of joy would there haunt her repose—that lulled by monastic solitude, that nurse of enthusiastic melancholy, imaginary

woe would become realized, and peace but the produce of a dream. A thousand times did she form the resolution of returning to her usual employs—a thousand times did she wonder at her own inanity, and strive to throw off her dejection: yet was the effort vain, for experience taught her, that we must extinguish the "vital spark of heavenly flame" which burns within us, ere we can cease to think. Love, the all-subduing power, the tyrant of lordly man, pictured the worshipped idol—laughed at every resolve, and proudly kept the field. Such were the days and nights of Antonia—such the ruminations of her waking and sleeping hours: for heavy lingered the time of Dauverne's absence, and the third morning gleamed without announcing his return.

The evening was mild and inviting; Mrs. Moreland declined walking, and Antonia and her young companion

commenced their accustomary ramble. They reached the Grange, talked to the housekeeper, and from thence proceeded through the shrubbery. Scarce a breath of air ruffled the smooth surface of the Avon; the banks were covered with a profusion of fragrant flowering shrubs; the tamarisk, the laurestine, the arbutus, the flexile ozier, the bending cypress, and the weeping birch, fancifully fringed its margin; whilst, ever and anon, the deep laden barge, gliding o'er its glassy bosom, marked it with a momentary impression and vanished.

Antonia, in silent contemplation, watched the gradual decline of the sun; and marked its last glowing reflection, as in a stream of refulgent glory it sunk beneath the western hemisphere. Often, in Italy, had she thus viewed its departure, until the envious walls of her convent closed it from her sight; and then turn to

pour her expectations, her hopes, her wishes, into the pure bosom of friendship—the mild, the considerate sister Benedicta! "Perhaps, at this moment," mentally sighed Antonia, her eyes resting on the same bright luminary; "perhaps she is musing on the orphan of her wronged, her sainted friend! Ah heaven! exists there the murderer of my mother?—exists there the being who plunged her from bliss to misery—from misery to death? Should my eyes ever encounter him, through them, let my heart find vent to speak its injuries, and to proclaim its detestation.—My father too! slumbers he in the grave? or, knows he of the existence of his child? Unfortunate pair! hapless, revered parents! Ah! why is the veil of mystery so thick?—why does it so closely envelope thy fate?" Again her hopes of elucidation rested on the marquis—the marquis

brought with him Dauverne—Dauverne Geraldine; and supposition closed in a heavy sigh.

The blue vapours of night, now mantling the hills, shrouded the distant cottages; and the bat was swift sailing through the air; the nightingale warbled from her leafy recess, save, now and then, when the melancholy cries of aquatic fowl disturbed the plaint, and frightened her from her resting place. Antonia and the children were preparing to return to the vicarage, when a general alarm was excited by the absence of Werter; in vain they called, in vain the hills re-echoed with his name; the truant returned not. They sought him in every avenue; they beat at every bush, but still was Werter missing, and anxiety and doubt remained. "Oh dear! what shall we say to Mr. Dauverne, if Werter does not come back?"

said Ellen. "I would sooner lose all my play-things, and Daphne, and the puppy, and——"

"I warrant he will come home," replied Stanley; "if he knows when he's well off, he'll not desert us. I am sure he cannot have a kinder master? Who knows? perhaps he is at the fishing-house. I'll be there first, Ellen," and away they bounded. "How very provoking!" thought Antonia, looking anxiously around; for it was now getting dark, and she was fearful their long absence might occasion uneasiness. "Mr. Dauverne will think me so heedless—so negligent of his favourite; indeed we must go home," turning, to address the children; but they were also gone. She feared to seek them, lest, returning to the spot from whence they had quitted her, they should again miss of each other. The evening was now so far advanced, and the overhanging branches increased so

much its gloom, that Antonia became seriously alarmed. Trembling at the possibility of accident, she blamed herself for suffering her young companions to quit her, and, in breathless impatience, listened, in the hope of catching the sound of their voices. "Miss Forrester, Miss Forrester!" at length exclaimed Percival, running towards her, with pleasure and surprise imprinted on his countenance—"who do you think I have seen?"

Dauverne rushed to her imagination, and a glowing blush mantled her cheek. "Werter," she articulated, as her eyes wandered around in search of Werter's master. "No, not Werter," replied the delighted boy, "but——but—— can't you guess? Ah! see he is coming."

Antonia turned, and beheld a stranger between Stanley and Ellen, who hailed him with smiles of recognition, as they sportively prattled by his side.

"See, this is dear Miss Forrester," said Ellen, taking her hand. "Come, do let us go home, and you will hear how delightfully she plays on the harp!"

Antonia bowed; the stranger took off his hat. "Grateful am I to my little cousins for this introduction," he exclaimed; "for Miss Forrester, to me, is only personally a stranger."—"*Only personally a stranger* to Sir Frederic Stanley," thought Antonia: "who but Dauverne could thus have introduced me to his knowledge?"

The reflection was pleasing; for it was clear Dauverne, even in absence, had not forgotten her. At that instant, his well-known form, among the trees, met her eyes, and Werter fawning at his feet. He rushed forward, seized her hand, and a smile of undisguised pleasure welcomed his return. "Oh, you truant!" said Antonia, patting her little favourite—"could not even my

kindness retain you?" "Ungrateful, senseless fellow!" exclaimed Sir Frederic, fixing his eyes on Antonia, to desert so fair a mistress." "Pardon me," observed Dauverne, "I think it is a convincing proof of his gratitude; for though sensible of present favours, he forgets not the past." "Could he ever forget his master," artlessly said Antonia, "I should hate him." "There could be no fear of that, Miss Forrester," remarked Percival; "for not a day passed without your speaking to him of his master, and sending him to the window, by saying he was coming." Disconcerted, Antonia's eyes sought the ground; Dauverne's exultingly rested on her; and Sir Frederic tore to atoms the rose he held in his hand. "A pretty confidant you, my little hero!" he said, with a forced laugh: "had you told me as much, ye gods! vanity would have ran away with my other senses, and confirmed me an ar-

rant puppy." "How could Percival tell you so?" asked Ellen; "for till now Miss Forrester never saw you." "Unless," said Dauverne, joining in the laugh, "Miss Forrester can trace in you the *crest-fallen Frederick Stanley*." "Miss Forrester, I trust, will judge a man by his actions, not by his words," rejoined the baronet; for, should she take but a cursory view of me, she will most certainly proclaim me a strange creature—a compound of contrarieties." "Where the good predominates," mildly observed Antonia; "the compound must be pleasing." "Thank you! thank you!" repeated Sir Frederic: "with such an advocate, who dares doubt of victory?" "I prophesied, Miss Forrester," said Dauverne, walking by her side, "that my absence from Warwickshire would not extend beyond three or four days; and I am sure my words are realized; for you see," glancing at his friend, "the

runagate seeks, in dometic quiet, a balm for past difficulties." "Had sympathy whispered," exclaimed Sir Frederic Stanley, "that heaven's

——————— "wondrous hand
A transcript of itself had plann'd,"

and, smiling on the rude solitude of the vicarage, invested it with the blessing—not the bustle of London—the smile of beauty, or the arm of fate herself, would have restrained me."

Dauverne smiled; while little Percival, looking gravely in the baronet's face, said—"Do tell me, what kind of a place is the watch-house? I suppose it is very dark and very dismal. Do you know, I thought, until papa read your letter, that only very bad people were shut up in a prison." "Indeed, Percival, your conjecture was right: they are not usually put there for their good behaviour," replied Dauverne, laughing. "Is cou-

sin Stanley wicked, then?" mournfully questioned Ellen. "No, no," repeated Dauverne, "not *absolutely* wicked, but *prone* to error." "Then, why does he not follow your steps?" asked Percival; "for mama says, if we look up to you we must always do right." "Your excellent mother is too partial, my dear boy," he answered; "she views me ever with the eye of friendship." "So she does Sir Frederic," exclaimed Stanley; "but she never tells us to take him for an example." "Because," said the baronet, good-humouredly, "nature made Dauverne temperate, and me hot-brained; she made Dauverne thoughtful, considerate, prudent, and governable; me, thoughtless, inconsiderate, imprudent, and ungovernable." "Well, you confess your errors," observed Antonia, "and that is universally allowed to be the first step towards amendment." "That I have, Miss Forrester," rejoined

Sir Frederic, "a dozen times, and relapsed in less than as many hours."

They had now reached the vicarage; Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, anxiously awaited their return, and welcomed their escort, with the warm greeting of hospitality. Cheerfulness was once more restored, for good spirits, and good cheer, graced the friendly board. The exploits of Sir Frederic became the theme of conversation; and, though his own historian, he freely joined in the laugh raised at his expence.

At the request of Dauverne, Antonia swept the strings of the harp and, as she sweetly warbled a plaintive ditty, Sir Frederic, in his admiration forgot the fair and interesting Mahal — forgot the captivating Lady Selina in whose praise he had recently been so lavish. His eyes were fixed intently on her; and, when they separated for the night, he wondered that his heart had ever acknowledged less than pas-

fection. Warm and ungarded, his actions ever proceeded from the impulse of the moment; and if that impulse led to error, as we have before mentioned, it was the head, and not the heart, which dictated. "Dauverne," said Sir Frederic, joining him the next morning in the filbert walk, "this little Italian is an angel. Such beauty—such innocence—such unaffected simplicity—such a face—such a form—such a complexion—such celestial eyes!"—"What the reign of black is closed then," interrupted Dauverne. "Like all other *reigns*," resumed the baronet, "when terminated, the brilliancy is in part lost; and the newly risen star is the criterion of perfection." "But you are so very variable," observed his friend. "Look at the temptation," replied Sir Frederic, "and cease to wonder." "Where now is the fascinating Mahala?" questioned Dauverne. "In Lombard-street." "Where is your heart?"

"In Warwickshire." "Where is your constancy?" "Sited, firm as upon a rock," he answered; "for, if the divine Antonia will accept so fallible a being as myself, I'll marry her." "Marry her!" repeated Dauverne, receding a few paces; "marry Miss Forrester!" "And why not?" inquired Sir Frederic. "Stanley," said Dauverne, firmly, "you are ever precipitate: Miss Forrester merits an undivided heart—" "And, by heaven, she shall have one!" warmly interrupted the baronet. "No faint offering mine—no reluctant sacrifice: the chains of matrimony to thousands may be galling, but when fettered by perfection, who would renounce the yoke?" "The peace of a woman, and such a woman," resumed his friend, after a painful pause, "ought not to be slightingly sported with. Stanley, this impetuosity will be your bane—consult Dr. Moreland—for heaven's sake, take time for considera-

tion!" "What, and lose the prize? No, no, Dauverne! In four days the marquis arrives at the Grange, and with him, a whole swarm of locusts (for many of our Bond-street loungers merit no better appellation): they are famed for prefering the sweetest flowers; and Miss Forrester will of course soon be signalized." "The woman who cannot bear the test, believe me, is unworthy your affection," replied Dauverne; "besides, even could Miss Forrester love you, she knows the story of the quaker, and precipitation may ruin all." "True," said Sir Frederic; "there, I allow, reason is on your side. Cursed folly! it has marred all my plans.—What shall I do? Advise me how to act. I'd give the world, if I possessed it, I'd not proclaimed that ridiculous adventure —fool, dolt, to pen such a confounded scrawl! How could you possibly show it?" "Nay," said Dauverne,

"had you hinted it was a secret, I should certainly not have betrayed your confidence." "She must think me so inconsiderate—so impetuous—so contemptible.—'Tis the most serious difficulty I've ever had to encounter. Do, my dear fellow, give me a helping hand." "The present is always the most arduous;" remarked Dauverne: "take time, I say, a little patience and deliberation, depend upon it, will prove the most effectual adviser." "He jests at scars who never felt a wound," reproachfully exclaimed Sir Frederic. Dauverne started. "Supposing," he continued, "you was violently in love, with—with—we'll say, Lady Geraldine, and—" "Lady Geraldine," coldly repeated Dauverne. "Well, no matter who," rejoined the baronet; "Lady Selina, or, Lady—anybody you please; and, when you had determined to throw yourself on her mercy—to declare the

ardour of your passion, and breathe forth the presumptuous wish of a return, some one was to whisper in your ear, *take time*—what would you do then?" Dauverne was silent; the appeal came home—it reached his heart, and filled it with palpable emotion. He dared not trust himself to speak, lest the tremulous accents of his voice should betray his too great awakened interest. "Why," concluded his friend, clapping him on the shoulder, "send *time* to the devil." "To a certainly," said Dauverne, warmly, "the indelicacy will forfeit even the esteem of Miss Forrester. Besides, where is my little interesting cousin Selina? I thought," attempting cheerfulness, "the arrival of the Allingthorn family at the Grange would have occasioned *opportunities of studying her character*." "Then," said Sir Frederic, gravely, "I had not seen Miss Forrester; and though I

admire Lady Selina, though I acknowledge her to be excessively lovely, excessively captivating, yet——" "Variety, variety," interrupted Dauverne, "that never-failing incentive, singles out a fresh object of adoration, who promises to reign till—" "Time shall be no more," ardently concluded Sir Frederic; "for if Miss Forrester should accept me," Dauverne shuddered, "I will be the most attached, the most tender, the most indulgent of husbands—I will forswear all my pursuits, cut with all my follies—and if ever a pair of bright eyes inveigle me again into the watch-house, may I never, never, get out!" "I believe you, my dear Stanley," said Dauverne, mournfully, "honour most assuredly will be the inviolable monitor of your actions—will stamp your character, as irreproachable in matrimony, as it is in friendship." "Thank you," resumed Sir Frederic, shaking him gratefully

by the hand; "but why then should I procrastinate? You know," significantly, "we are told never to defer till to-morrow what can be done to-day." Dauverne smiled. "Besides," he continued, "next week there will be so much gaiety, so much folly, and so much fashion at the Grange, that I shall scarce find an opportunity of pouring forth my plaint? and if by waiting I should lose the prize—think, if any of the visitors should steal the heart I covet. Sunderland admires beauty, and, by his own account, is ever a successful advocate—if——" "Sunderland," interrupted Dauverne; "by heaven, the very supposition injures the delicacy of Antonia! Sunderland, a profligate spendthrift, a coxcomb, whose conceit is only equalled by his impudence, a dabler with Jews, jockeys, and swindlers.——Sunderland—indeed, indeed, Stanley, you know not the soul

of Miss Forrester; for had he millions to offer, instead of the ruined patrimony of his respected father, she would, from the known tenor of his character, decidedly, unconditionally, reject him. Believe me, she has not imbibed the sentiments of the world; she looks for worth, not fortune—virtue, not popularity." "By the bye," exclaimed Sir Frederic, wandering at once from the subject, "that same world says strange things of Tom Sunderland:—it says, that though the father died as rich as Crœsus, the son will shortly become as poor as any honourable descendant in his majesty's dominions:—it says, that what with carriages, mistresses, dice, boxing, and racing, not a black-leg at Newmarket has lighter pockets." "Nay, is that a *strange thing?*" questioned Dauverne, "I am sure, its *first* circles can produce many high-flying specimens of the same stamp.—But,

do you know, it reports even a *stranger thing* than that; for it says, that the beautiful Duchess of Delaware's love for play has so drained the finances of her noble lord, that some of the old timber on the estates must groan beneath the stroke of the axe, to satisfy the demands of importunate creditors." "Pshaw! is that all?" rejoined the baronet, laughing. "Why, do you know, it scruples not to affirm, that a more *rare* and *valuable* stake has been forfeited by this fair votary. Husbands are sometimes blind—accommodating—or—a thousand convenient things: and—

"He that is robb'd, not *knowing* what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all."

"Come, come," said Dauverne, "you are absolutely scurrilous." "'Pon my soul, I am not! The report is, to the very letter, as I heard it; and it was a constant visitor and *intimate*

friend of her grace who gave it currency." "It was a *friendly* office, however," remarked Dauverne. "Oh! nothing new," rejoined Sir Frederic; "friendship, with the fashionable, and friendship with the plain jog-trotting, are two distinct passions:—the former *praises* everything, *smiles* at everything, *echoes* everything (at least, before your face), then, with *lingering reluctance,* quits your *charming* society; and, in the very first party *satirizes* your credulity, *magnifies* your errors, *laughs* at your good nature, and *deals* out your folly with as lavish a hand as ever prodigal did his guineas; while the *real,* unvarnished, disinterested friend despises professions, has too much regard to be a silent witness of folly, and too much honour to publish it to the world. In short, they are two distinct beings, as different as—ah! yonder is the sweet Antonia: pardon me, my dear Dau-

verne, but this is no time to discriminate."

And away he hastened to join the object of his *present* adoration. "Antonia the wife of Stanley," mused Dauverne, as Sir Frederic quitted him: "the mistress of my soul, married to the friend of my bosom; and I to be the adviser, I to be the mediator. Unheard of perplexity! cruel, unthinking father, to extort so strange a promise! Antonia, most adored, most idolized of women, would that my eyes had never beheld thee! or rather would that my hand had been as free a gift as my heart! Lie still, thou throbbing captive; honour must be thy master; for sooner than become an apostate to thee will the wretched Dauverne perish. She knows not, she shall never know my affection," he continued, moving slowly forward. "I will watch thee, Antonia; I will

guard thee from danger—from the snares into which thy inexperience may lead thee; and if I see thee happy I will smile, although my heart is breaking."

Such was the resolve which honour dictated—such the new formed plan of Dauverne: and from this period Antonia perceived a visible alteration in his manner, a kind of reserve which filled her with disquietude, and made her reflect on her own conduct to discover the source.

He no longer sought to anticipate her wishes—no longer lingered by her side, or amused her by the relation of a thousand anecdotes. If they walked, apparently immerged in some abstruse argument, he remained behind with Dr. Moreland, or with a well-assumed appearance of cheerfulness chased the laughing children through the long grass. Sometimes, indeed, thrown off

his guard, for whole moments he would gaze upon her—sometimes she even fancied she could trace an expression of sadness in his countenance which betrayed not indifference. But then she remembered he had once acknowledged himself unhappy—she remembered also the disposition, the pursuits of Lady Geraldine, and doubt vanished.

With smiles of gratitude she received the attentions of Sir Frederic, smiles which fanned the fire of new created love, and obliterated every recollection but of her beauty. The so lately envied Powersly and his interesting Mahala were no more thought of; or if they were at times recollected it was to undervalue the charms of the latter, by comparisons with the more lovely Antonia.

Such were the new awakened sensations which agitated the inmates

of the vicarage—such the state of their feelings when the light dawned, which was to close on the arrival of the Marquis and Marchioness of Allingthorn.

END OF VOL. I.

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